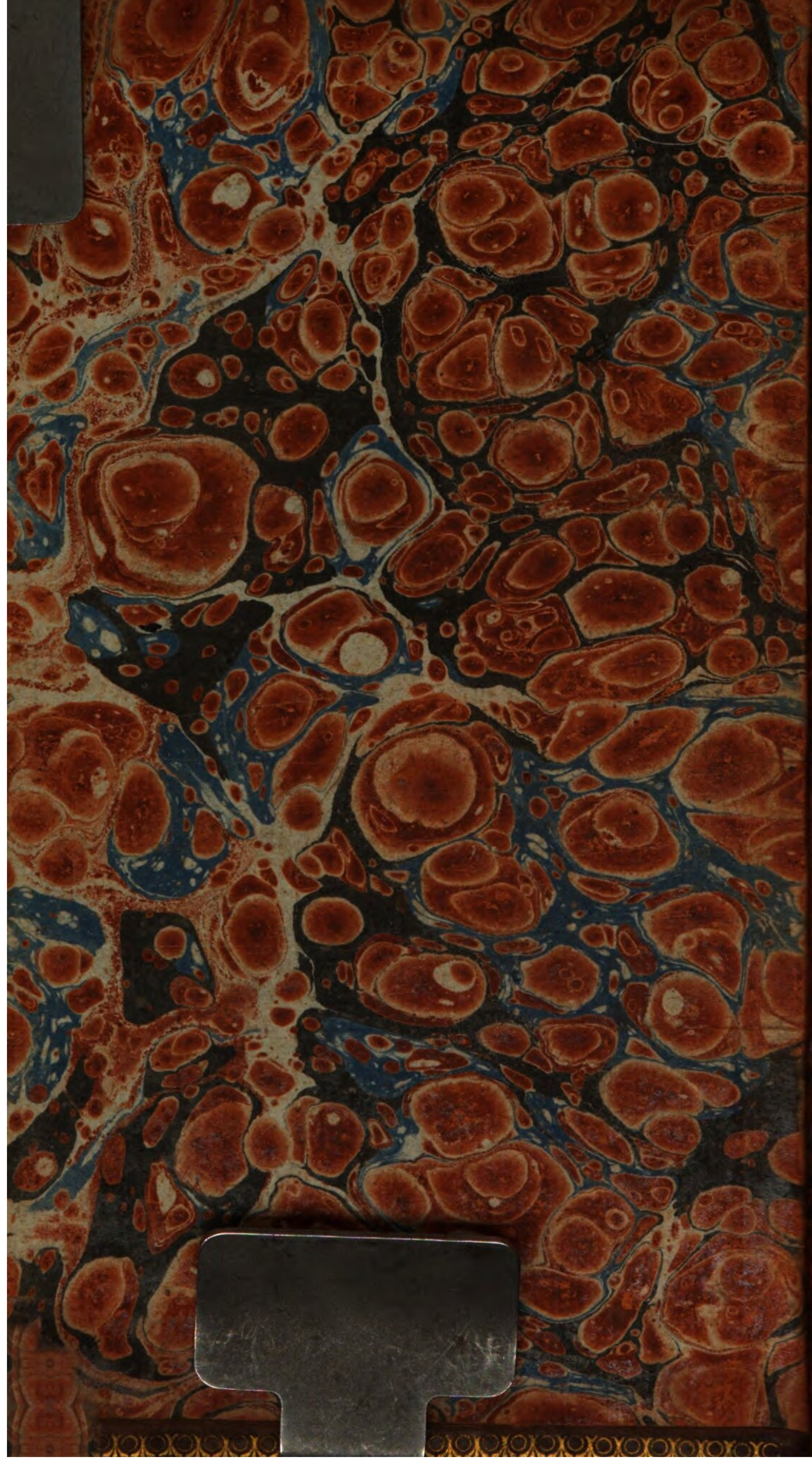
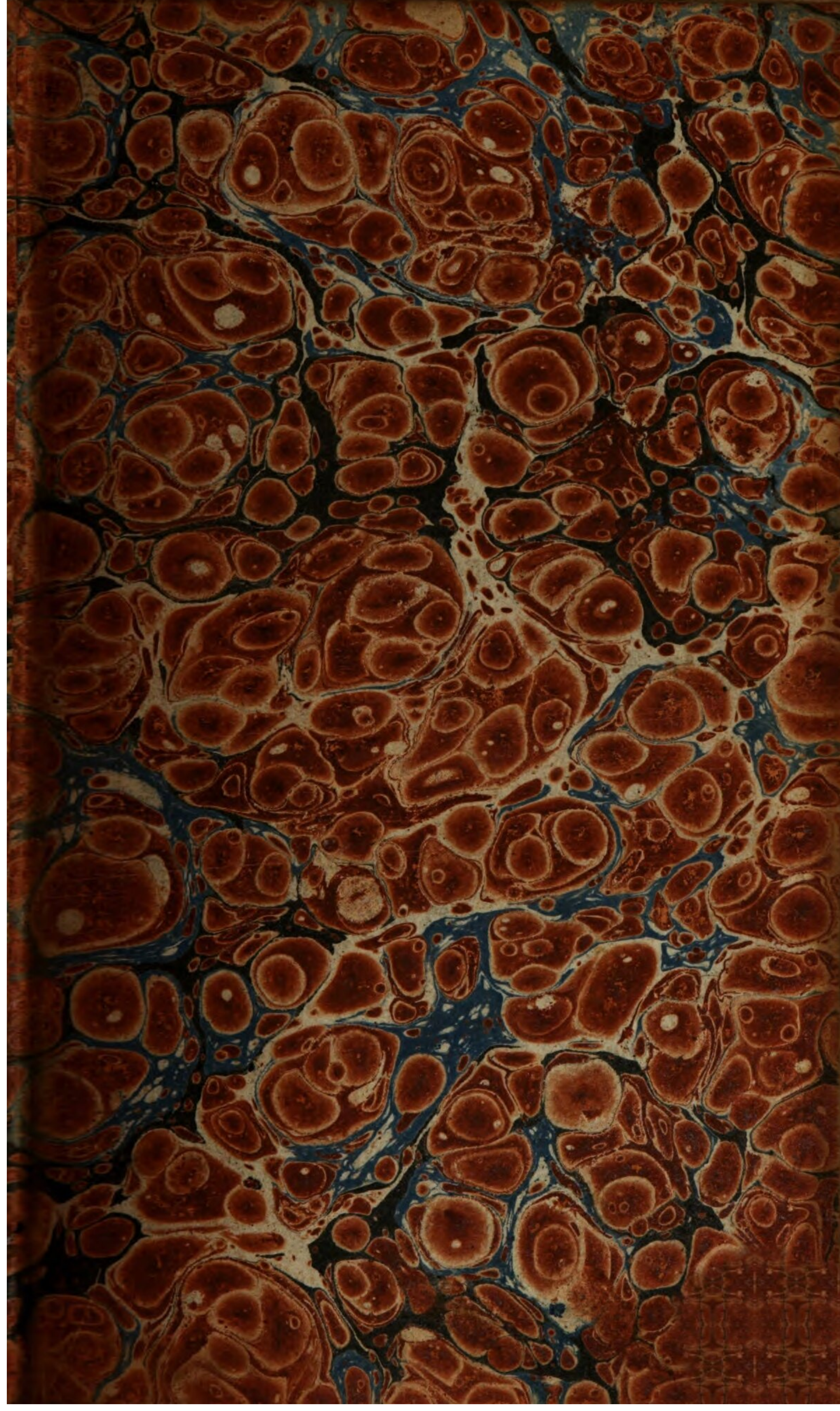


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LORD BYRON'S WORKS.

IV.

LORD BYRON'S WORKS.

PRINTED BY FAIN, PLACE DE L'ODÉON.

LORD BYRON'S WORKS.

VOLUME THE FOURTH.

CONTAINING :

THE SIEGE OF CORINTH — MANFRED — MAZEPPA — THE
PRISONER OF CHILLON — THE LAMENT OF TASSO —
VARIOUS POEMS.

PARIS,

SOLD BY FRANÇOIS LOUIS,
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1821.

LORD BLYTH

WORK

FOR THE FUTURE

CONTAINS

THE FIRST OF TWO VOLUMES - THE
SECOND OF TWO VOLUMES - THE
THIRD OF TWO VOLUMES - THE

PARTS

SOLD BY FRANCIS TOWN

AT HIS BOOKSHELF AND STATIONERY SHOP

NOT BATHING STREET

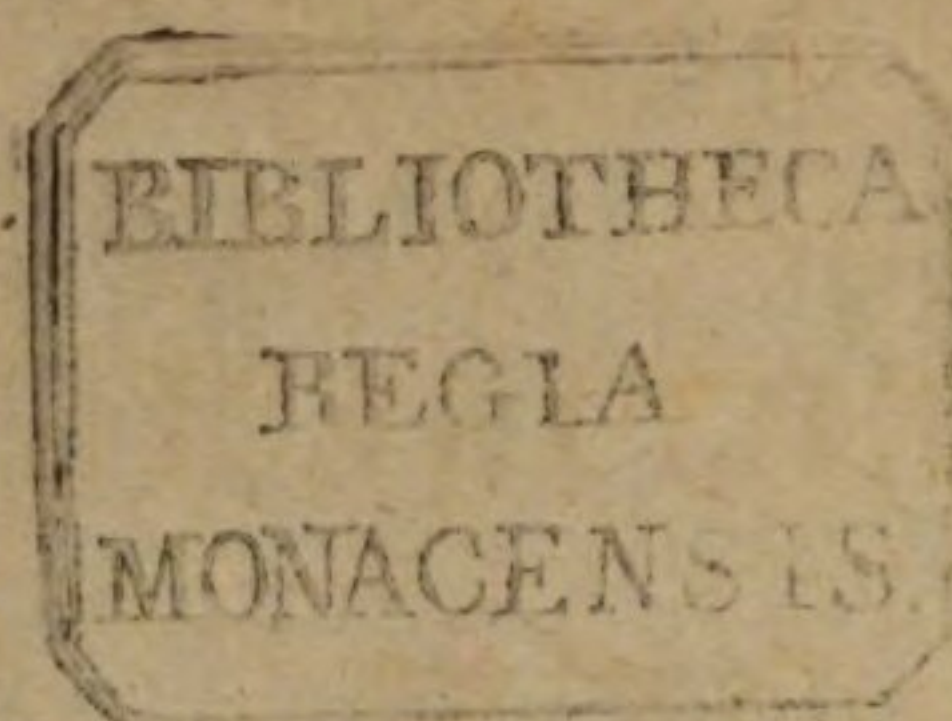
AND LONDON

AT THE BOOKSHELF AND STATIONERY SHOP

NOT BATHING STREET

(1811)

THE SIEGE OF CORINTH.



THE PIECE OF COUNTRY

ADVERTISEMENT.

« THE grand army of the Turks (in 1715),
« under the prime vizier, to open to themselves
« a way into the heart of the Morea, and to
« form the siege of Napoli di Romania, the
« most considerable place in all that country (1),
« thought it best in the first place to attack
« Corinth, upon which they made several
« storms. The garrison being weakened, and
« the governor seeing it was impossible to hold
« out against so mighty a force, thought fit to
« beat a parley : but while they were treating
« about the articles, one of the magazines in
« the Turkish camp, wherein they had six hun-
« dred barrels of powder, blew up by acci-
« dent, whereby six or seven hundred men

(1) Napoli di Romania is not now the most considerable place in the Morea, but Tripolitza, where the Pacha resides, and maintains his government. Napol is near Argos. I visited all three in 1810-11 ; and in the course of journeying through the country from my first arrival in 1809, I crossed the Isthmus eight times in my way from Attica to the Morea, over the mountains, or in the other direction, when passing from the Gulf of Athens to that of Lepanto. Both the routes are picturesque and beautiful, though very different : that by sea has more sameness, but the voyage being always within sight of land, and often very near it, presents many attractive views of the islands Salamis, Ægina, Poro, etc., and the coast of the continent.

« were killed : which so enraged the Infidels,
 « that they would not grant any capitulation,
 « but stormed the place with so much fury,
 « that they took it, and put most of the garrison,
 « with Signior Minotti, the governor, to the
 « sword. The rest, with Antonio Bembo, pro-
 « veditor extraordinary, were made prisoners
 « of war. » — *History of the Turks*, vol. iij,
 p. 151.

THE

SIEGE OF CORINTH.

I.

MANY a vanished year and age,
And tempest's breath, and battle's rage,
Have swept o'er Corinth ; yet she stands
A fortress formed to Freedom's hands.
The whirlwind's wrath, the earthquake's shock,
Have left untouched her hoary rock,
The keystone of a land, which still,
Though fall'n, looks proudly on that hill,
The land-mark to the double tide
That purpling rolls on either side,
As if their waters chafed to meet,
Yet pause and crouch beneath her feet.
But could the blood before her shed
Since first Timoleon's brother bled,
Or baffled Persia's despot fled,
Arise from out the earth which drank
The stream of slaughter as it sank,
That sanguine Ocean would o'erflow
Her isthmus idly spread below :
Or could the bones of all the slain,
Who perished there, be piled again,

That rival pyramid would rise
More mountain-like, through those clear skies,
Than yon tower-capt Acropolis,
Which seems the very clouds to kiss.

II.

On dun Cithæron's ridge appears
The gleam of twice ten thousand spears;
And downward to the Isthmian plain,
From shore to shore of either main,
The tent is pitched, the crescent shines
Along the Moslem's leaguering lines ;
And the dusk Spahi's bands advance
Beneath each bearded pasha's glance ;
And far and wide as eye can reach
The turbaned cohorts throng the beach ;
And there the Arab's camel kneels,
And there his steed the Tartar wheels ;
The Turcoman hath left his herd¹,
The sabre round his loins to gird ;
And there the volleying thunders pour,
Till waves grow smoother to the roar.
The trench is dug, the cannon's breath
Wings the far hissing globe of death ;
Fast whirl the fragments from the wall,
Which crumbles with the ponderous ball ;
And from that wall the foe replies,
O'er dusty plain and smoky skies,
With fires that answer fast and well
The summons of the Infidel.

III.

But near and nearest to the wall
Of those who wish and work its fall,

With deeper skill in war's black art
Than Othman's sons, and high of heart
As any chief that ever stood
Triumphant in the fields of blood,
From post to post, and deed to deed,
Fast spurring on his reeking steed
Where sallying ranks the trench assail,
And make the foremost Moslem quail;
Or where the battery, guarded well,
Remains as yet impregnable,
Alighting cheerly to inspire
The soldier slackening in his fire;
The first and freshest of the host
Which Stamboul's sultan there can boast,
To guide the follower o'er the field,
To point the tube, the lance to wield,
Or whirl around the bickering blade;—
Was Alp, the Adrian renegade!

IV.

From Venice—once a race of worth
His gentle sires—he drew his birth;
But late an exile from her shore,
Against his countrymen he bore
The arms they taught to bear; and now
The turban girt his shaven brow.
Through many a change had Corinth passed
With Greece to Venice' rule at last;
And here, before her walls, with those
To Greece and Venice equal foes,
He stood a foe, with all the zeal
Which young and fiery converts feel,
Within whose heated bosom throngs
The memory of a thousand wrongs.

To him had Venice ceased to be
 Her ancient civic boast—"the Free;"
 And in the palace of St. Mark
 Unnamed accusers in the dark
 Within the « Lion's mouth » had placed
 A charge against him uneffaced:
 He fled in time, and saved his life,
 To waste his future years in strife,
 That taught his land how great her loss
 In him who triumphed o'er the Cross,
 'Gainst which he reared the Crescent high,
 And battled to avenge or die.

V.

Coumourgi²—he whose closing scene
 Adorned the triumph of Eugene,
 When on Carlowitz' bloody plain,
 The last and mightiest of the slain,
 He sank, regretting not to die,
 But curst the Christian's victory—
 Coumourgi—can his glory cease,
 That latest conqueror of Greece,
 Till Christian hands to Greece restore
 The freedom Venice gave of yore?
 A hundred years have rolled away
 Since he refixed the Moslem's sway;
 And now he led the Mussulman,
 And gave the guidance of the van
 To Alp, who well repaid the trust
 By cities levelled with the dust;
 And proved, by many a deed of death,
 How firm his heart in novel faith.

VI.

The walls grew weak ; and fast and hot
Against them poured the ceaseless shot,
With unabating fury sent
From battery to battlement ;
And thunder-like the pealing din
Rose from each heated culverin ;
And here and there some crackling dome
Was fired before the exploding bomb :
And as the fabric sank beneath
The shattering shell's volcanic breath,
In red and wreathing columns flashed
The flame, as loud the ruin crashed,
Or into countless meteors driven,
Its earth-stars melted into heaven ;
Whose clouds that day grew doubly dun,
Impervious to the hidden sun,
With volumed smoke that slowly grew
To one wide sky of sulphurous hue.

VII.

But not for vengeance, long delayed,
Alone, did Alp, the renegade,
The Moslem warriors sternly teach
His skill to pierce the promised breach :
Within these walls a maid was pent
His hope would win, without consent
Of that inexorable sire,
Whose heart refused him in its ire,
When Alp, beneath his Christian name,
Her virgin hand aspired to claim.

In happier mood, and earlier time,
While unimpeached for traitorous crime,
Gayest in gondola or hall,
He glittered through the Carnival;
And tuned the softest serenade
That e'er on Adria's waters played
At midnight to Italian maid.

VIII.

And many deemed her heart was won;
For sought by numbers, given to none,
Had young Francesca's hand remained
Still by the church's bonds unchained ;
And when the Adriatic bore
Lanciotto to the Paynim shore,
Her wonted smiles were seen to fail,
And pensive waxed the maid and pale ;
More constant at confessional,
More rare at masque and festival;
Or seen at such with downcast eyes,
Which conquered hearts they ceased to prize :
With listless look she seems to gaze ;
With humbler care her form arrays ;
Her voice less lively in the song ;
Her step, though light, less fleet among
The pairs, on whom the Morning's glance
Breaks, yet unsated with the dance.

IX.

Sent by the state to guard the land,
(Which, wrested from the Moslem's hand,
While Sobieski tamed his pride
By Buda's wall and Danube's side,

The chiefs of Venice wrung away
From Patra to Eubœa's bay,)
Minotti held in Corinth's towers
The Doge's delegated powers,
While yet the pitying eye of Peace
Smiled o'er her long forgotten Greece :
And here that faithless truce was broke
Which freed her from the unchristian yoke,
With him his gentle daughter came;
Nor there, since Menelaus' dame
Forsook her lord and land, to prove
What woes await on lawless love,
Had fairer form adorned the shore
Than she, the matchless stranger, bore.

X.

The wall is rent, the ruins yawn ;
And, with to morrow's earliest dawn,
O'er the disjointed mass shall vault
The foremost of the fierce assault.
The bands are ranked ; the chosen van
Of Tartar, and of Mussulman,
The full of hope, misnamed « forlorn, »
Who hold the thought of death in scorn,
And win their way with falchion's force,
Or pave the path with many a corse,
O'er which the following brave may rise,
Their stepping-stone—the last who dies!

XI.

'Tis midnight : on the mountain's brown
The cold, round moon shines deeply down;

Blue roll the waters, blue the sky
Spreads like an Ocean hung on high,
Bespangled with those isles of light,
So wildly, spiritually bright;
Who ever gazed upon them shining,
And turned to earth without repining,
Nor wished for wings to flee away,
And mix with their eternal ray?
The waves on either shore lay there
Calm, clear, and azure as the air;
And scarce their foam the pebbles shook,
But murmured meekly as the brook.
The winds were pillowed on the waves;
The banners drooped along their staves,
And, as they fell around them furling,
Above them shone the crescent, curling;
And that deep silence was unbroke,
Save where the watch his signal spoke,
Save where the steed neighed oft and shrill,
And echo answered from the hill,
And the wide hum of that wild host
Rustled like leaves from coast to coast,
As rose the Muezzin's voice in air
In midnight call to wonted prayer;
It rose, that chanted mournful strain,
Like some lone spirit's o'er the plain:
'Twas musical, but sadly sweet,
Such as when winds and harp-strings meet,
And take a long unmeasured tone,
To mortal minstrelsy unknown.
It seemed to those within the wall
A cry prophetic of their fall:
It struck even the besieger's ear
With something ominous and drear.

An undefined and sudden thrill,
Which makes the heart a moment still,
Then beat with quicker pulse, ashamed
Of that strange sense its silence framed;
Such as a sudden passing-bell
Wakes, though but for a stranger's knell.

XII.

The tent of Alp was on the shore;
The sound was hushed, the prayer was o'er;
The watch was set, the night-round made,
All mandates issued and obeyed:
'Tis but another anxious night,
His pains the morrow may requite
With all revenge and love can pay,
In guerdon for their long delay.
Few hours remain, and he hath need
Of rest, to nerve for many a deed
Of slaughter; but within his soul
The thoughts like troubled waters roll:
He stood alone among the host;
Not his the loud fanatic boast
To plant the crescent o'er the cross,
Or risk a life with little loss,
Secure in paradise to be
By Houris loved immortally:
Nor his, what burning patriots feel,
The stern exaltedness of zeal,
Profuse of blood, untired in toil,
When battling on the parent soil.
He stood alone—a renegade
Against the country he betrayed;
He stood alone amidst his band,
Without a trusted heart or hand:

They followed him, for he was brave,
And great the spoil he got and gave;
They crouched to him, for he had skill
To warp and wield the vulgar will :
But still his Christian origin
With them was little less than sin.
They envied even the faithless fame
He earned beneath a Moslem name ;
Since he, their mightiest chief, had been
In youth a bitter Nazarene.
They did not know how pride can stoop,
When baffled feelings withering droop ;
They did not know how hate can burn
In hearts once changed from soft to stern ;
Nor all the false and fatal zeal
The convert of revenge can feel.
He ruled them—man may rule the worst,
By ever daring to be first :
So lions o'er the jackal sway ;
The jackal points, he fells the prey,
Then on the vulgar yelling press,
To gorge the relics of success.

XIII.

His head grows fevered, and his pulse
The quick successive throbs convulse ;
In vain from side to side he throws
His form, in courtship of repose ;
Or if he dozed, a sound, a start
Awoke him with a sunken heart.
The turban on his hot brow pressed,
The mail weighed lead-like on his breast,
Though oft and long beneath its weight
Upon his eyes had slumber sate,

Without or couch or canopy,
Except a rougher field or sky
Than now might yield a warrior's bed,
Than now along the heaven was spread.
He could not rest, he could not stay
Within his tent to wait for day,
But walked him forth along the sand,
Where thousand sleepers strewed the strand.
What pillowed them? and why should he
More wakeful than the humblest be?
Since more their peril, worse their toil,
And yet they fearless dream of spoil;
While he alone, where thousands passed
A night of sleep, perchance their last,
In sickly vigil wandered on,
And envied all he gazed upon.

XIV.

He felt his soul become more light
Beneath the freshness of the night.
Cool was the silent sky, though calm,
And bathed his brow with airy balm;
Behind, the camp—before him lay,
In many a winding creek and bay,
Lepanto's gulf : and, on the brow
Of Delphi's hill, unshaken snow,
High and eternal, such as shone
Through thousand summers brightly gone
Along the gulf, the mount, the clime;
It will not melt, like man, to time :
Tyrant and slave are swept away,
Less formed to wear before the ray,
But that white veil, the lightest, frailest,
Which on the mighty mount thou hailest,

While tower and tree are torn and rent,
Shines o'er its craggy battlement;
In form a peak, in height a cloud,
In texture like a hovering shroud,
Thus high by parting Freedom spread,
As from her fond abode she fled,
And lingered on the spot where long
Her prophet spirit spake in song.
Oh ! still her step at moments falters
O'er withered fields and ruined altars,
And fain would wake in souls too broken,
By pointing to each glorious token.
But vain her voice, till better days
Dawn in those yet remembered rays
Which shone upon the Persian flying,
And saw the Spartan smile in dying.

XV.

Not mindless of these mighty times
Was Alp, despite his flight and crimes;
And through this night, as on he wandered,
And o'er the past and present pondered,
And thought upon the glorious dead
Who there in better cause had bled,
He felt how faint and feebly dim
The fame that could accrue to him,
Who cheered the band, and waved the sword,
A traitor in a turbaned horde;
And led them to the lawless siege,
Whose best success were sacrilege.
Not so had those his fancy numbered
The chiefs whose dust around him slumbered;
Their phalanx marshalled on the plain,
Whose bulwarks were not then in vain.

They fell devoted, but undying;
The very gale their names seemed sighing :
The waters murmured of their name;
The woods were peopled with their fame;
The silent pillar, lone and gray,
Claimed kindred with their sacred clay;
Their spirits wrapt the dusky mountain,
Their memory sparkled o'er the fountain;
The meanest rill, the mightiest river,
Rolled mingling with their fame for ever.
Despite of every yoke she bears,
That land is glory's still and theirs!
'Tis still a watch-word to the earth :
When man would do a deed of worth
He points to Greece, and turns to tread,
So sanctioned, on the tyrant's head :
He looks to her, and rushes on
Where life is lost, or freedom won.

XVI.

Still by the shore Alp mutely mused,
And wooed the freshness Night diffused.
There shrinks no ebb in that tideless sea,³
Which changeless rolls eternally;
So that wildest of waves, in their angriest mood,
Scarce break on the bounds of the land for a rood;
And the powerless moon beholds them flow,
Heedless if she come or go :
Calm or high, in main or bay,
On their course she hath no sway.
The rock unworn its base doth bare,
And looks o'er the surf, but it comes not there;
And the fringe of the foam may be seen below,
On the line that it left long ages ago :

A smooth short space of yellow sand
Between it and the greener land.
He wandered on, along the beach,
Till within the range of a carbine's reach
Of the leaguered wall; but they saw him not;
Or how could he 'scape from the hostile shot?
Did traitors lurk in the Christians' hold?
Were their hands grown stiff, or their hearts waxed cold?
I know not, in sooth; but from yonder wall
There flashed no fire, and there hissed no ball,
Though he stood beneath the bastion's frown,
That flanked the sea-ward gate of the town;
Though he heard the sound, and could almost tell
The sullen words of the sentinel,
As his measured step on the stone below
Clanked, as he paced it to and fro;
And he saw the lean dogs beneath the wall
Hold o'er the dead their carnival,
Gorging and growling o'er carcase and limb;
They were too busy to bark at him!
From a Tartar's skull they had stripped the flesh,
As ye peel the fig when its fruit is fresh;
And their white tusks crunched o'er the whiter skull, ⁴
As it slipped through their jaws when their edge grew
dull,
As they lazily mumbled the bones of the dead,
When they scarce could rise from the spot where they fed;
So well had they broken a lingering fast
With those who had fallen for that night's repast.
And Alp knew, by the turbans that rolled on the sand,
The foremost of these were the best of his band:
Crimson and green were the shawls of their wear,
And each scalp had a single long tuft of hair, ⁵
All the rest was shaven and bare.

The scalps were in the wild dogs maw,
The hair was tangled round his jaw.
But close by the shore on the edge of the gulf,
There sat a vulture flapping a wolf,
Who had stolen from the hills, but kept away,
Scared by the dogs, from the human prey;
But he seized on his share of a steed that lay,
Picked by the birds, on the sands of the bay.

XVII.

Alp turned him from the sickening sight :
Never had shaken his nerves in fight;
But he better could brook to behold the dying,
Deep in the tide of their warm blood lying,
Scorched with the death-thirst, and writhing in vain,
Than the perishing dead who are past all pain.
There is something of pride in the perilous hour,
Whate'er be the shape in which death may lower;
For Fame is there to say who bleeds,
And Honour's eye on daring deeds!
But when all is past, it is humbling to tread
O'er the weltering field of the tombless dead,
And see worms of the earth, and fowls of the air,
Beasts of the forest, all gathering there;
All regarding man as their prey,
All rejoicing in his decay.

XVIII.

There is a temple in ruin stands,
Fashioned by long forgotten hands;
Two or three columns, and many a stone,
Marble and granite, with grass o'ergrown!

Out upon Time! it will leave no more
Of the things to come than the things before!
Out upon Time! who for ever will leave
But enough of the past for the future to grieve
O'er that which hath been, and o'er that which must be:
What we have seen, our sons shall see;
Remnants of things that have passed away,
Fragments of stone, reared by creatures of clay!

XIX.

He sate him down at a pillar's base,
And passed his hand athwart his face;
Like one in dreary musing mood,
Declining was his attitude;
His head was drooping on his breast,
Fevered, throbbing, and opprest;
And o'er his brow, so downward bent,
Oft his beating fingers went,
Hurriedly, as you may see
Your own run over the ivory key,
Ere the measured tone is taken
By the chords you would awaken.
There he sate all heavily,
As he heard the night-wind sigh.
Was it the wind, through some hollow stone⁶,
Sent that soft and tender moan?
He lifted his head, and he looked on the sea,
But it was unrippled as glass may be;
He looked on the long grass—it waved not a blade;
How was that gentle sound conveyed?
He looked to the banners—each flag lay still,
So did the leaves on Cithæron's hill,
And he felt not a breath come over his cheek;
What did that sudden sound bespeak?

He turned to the left—is he sure of sight?
There sate a lady, youthful and bright!

XX.

He started up with more of fear
Than if an armed foe were near.
“ God of my fathers! what is here?
“ Who art thou, and wherefore sent
“ So near a hostile armament? ”
His trembling hands refused to sign
The cross he deemed no more divine :
He had resumed it in that hour,
But conscience wrung away the power.
He gazed, he saw : he knew the face
Of beauty, and the form of grace ;
It was Francesca by his side,
The maid who might have been his bride!

The rose was yet upon her cheek,
But mellowed with a tenderer streak :
Where was the play of her soft lips fled?
Gone was the smile that enlivened their red.
The Ocean’s calm within their view,
Beside her eye had less of blue;
But like that cold wave it stood still,
And its glance, though clear, was chill.
Around her form a thin robe twining,
Nought concealed her bosom shining;
Through the parting of her hair,
Floating darkly downward there,
Her rounded arm showed white and bare :
And ere yet she made reply,
Once she raised her hand on high;

It was so wan, and transparent of hue,
You might have seen the moon shine through.

XXI.

« I come from my rest to him I love best,
« That I may be happy, and he may be blest.
« I have passed the guards, the gate, the wall;
« Sought thee in safety through foes and all.
« 'Tis said the lion will turn and flee
« From a maid in the pride of her purity;
« And the power on high, that can shield the good
« Thus from the tyrant of the wood,
« Hath extended its mercy to guard me as well
« From the hands of the leaguering Infidel.
« I come—and if I come in vain,
« Never, oh never, we meet again!
« Thou hast done a fearful deed
« In falling away from thy father's creed :
« But dash that turban to earth, and sign
« The sign of the cross; and for ever be mine;
« Wring the black drop from thy heart,
« And to-morrow unites us no more to part. »

« And where should our bridal couch be spread?
« In the midst of the dying and the dead?
« For to-morrow we give to the slaughter and flame
« The sons and the shrines of the Christian name.
« None, save thou and thine, I've sworn,
« Shall be left upon the morn :
« But thee will I bear to a lovely spot,
« Where our hands shall be joined, and our sorrow forgot.
« There thou yet shalt be my bride,
« When once again I've quelled the pride

« Of Venice ; and her hated race
« Have felt the arm they would debase
« Scourge, with a whip of scorpions, those
• « Whom vice and envy made my foes. »

Upon his hand she laid her own—
Light was the touch, but it thrilled to the bone,
And shot a chillness to his heart,
Which fixed him beyond the power to start.
Though slight was that grasp so mortal cold,
He could not loose him from its hold ;
But never did clasp of one so dear
Strike on the pulse with such feeling of fear,
As those thin fingers, long and white,
Froze through his blood by their touch that night.
The feverish glow of his brow was gone,
And his heart sank so still that it felt like stone,
As he looked on the face, and beheld its hue
So deeply changed from what he knew :
Fair but faint—without the ray
Of mind, that made each feature play
Like sparkling waves on a sunny day ;
And her motionless lips lay still as death,
And her words came forth without her breath,
And there rose not a heave o'er her bosom's swell,
And there seemed not a pulse in her veins to dwell.
Though her eye shone out, yet the lids were fixed,
And the glance that it gave was wild and unmixed
With aught of change, as the eyes may seem
Of the restless who walk in a troubled dream ;
Like the figures on arras, that gloomily glare,
Stirred by the breath of the wintry air,
So seen by the dying lamp's fitful light,
Lifeless, but life-like, and awful to sight ;

As they seem, through the dimness, about to come down
From the shadowy wall where their images frown;
Fearfully flitting to and fro,
As the gusts on the tapestry come and go.

« If not for love of me be given,
« Thus much, then, for the love of heaven,—
« Again I say—that turban tear
« From off thy faithless brow, and swear
« Thine injured country's sons to spare,
« Or thou art lost; and never shalt see
« Not earth—that's past—but heaven or me.
« If this thou dost accord, albeit
« A heavy doom 'tis thine to meet,
« That doom shall half absolve thy sin,
« And mercy's gate may receive thee within :
« But pause one moment more, and take
« The curse of him thou didst forsake;
« And look once more to heaven, and see
« Its love for ever shut from thee.
« There is a light cloud by the moon—
« 'Tis passing, and will pass full soon—
« If, by the time its vapoury sail
« Hath ceased her shaded orb to veil,
« Thy heart within thee is not changed,
« Then God and man are both avenged;
« Dark will thy doom be, darker still
« Thine immortality of ill. »

Alp looked to heaven, and saw on high
The sign she spake of in the sky;
But his heart was swollen, and turned aside,
By deep interminable pride.

This first false passion of his breast
 Rolled like a torrent o'er the rest.
He sue for mercy! *He* dismayed
 By wild words of a timid maid!
He, wronged by Venice, vow to save
 Her sons, devoted to the grave!
 No—though that cloud were thunder's worst,
 And charged to crush him—let it burst!
 He looked upon it earnestly,
 Without an accent of reply;
 He watched it passing; it is flown:
 Full on his eye the clear moon shone,
 And thus he spake—"Whate'er my fate,
 " I am no changeling—'tis too late:
 " The reed in storms may bow and quiver,
 " Then rise again; the tree must shiver.
 " What Venice made me, I must be,
 " Her foe in all, save love to thee:
 " But thou art safe: oh! fly with me!"
 He turned, but she is gone!
 Nothing is there but the column stone.
 Hath she sunk in the earth, or melted in air?
 He saw not, he knew not; but nothing is there.

XXII.

The night is past, and shines the sun
 As if that morn were a jocund one.
 Lightly and brightly breaks away
 The Morning from her mantle grey,
 And the Noon will look on a sultry day.
 Hark to the trump, and the drum,
 And the mournful sound of the barbarous horn,
 And the flap of the banners, that flit as they're borne,

And the neigh of the steed, and the multitude's hum,
And the clash, and the shout, 'they come, they come!'
The horsetails⁸ are plucked from the ground, and the sword
From its sheath; and they form, and but wait for the word.
Tartar, and Spahi, and Turcoman,
Strike your tents, and throng to the van;
Mount ye, spur ye, skirr the plain,
That the fugitive may flee in vain,
When he breaks from the town; and none escape,
Aged or young, in the Christian shape;
While your fellows on foot, in a fiery mass,
Bloodstain the breach through which they pass.
The steeds are all bridled, and snort to the rein;
Curved is each neck, and flowing each mane;
White is the foam of their champ on the bit:
The spears are uplifted; the matches are lit;
The cannon are pointed, and ready to roar,
And crush the wall they have crumbled before:
Forms in his phalanx each Janizar;
Alp at their head; his right arm is bare,
So is the blade of his scimitar;
The khan and the pachas are all at their post;
The vizier himself at the head of the host.
When the culverin's signal is fired, then on;
Leave not in Corinth a living one—
A priest at her altars, a chief in her halls,
A hearth in her mansions, a stone on her walls.
God and the prophet—Alla Hu!
Up to the skies with that wild balloo!
" There the breach lies for passage, the ladder to scale;
" And your hands on your sabres, and how should ye fail?
" He who first downs with the red cross may crave
" His heart's dearest wish; let him ask it, and have! "

Thus uttered Coumourgî, the dauntless vizier;
The reply was the brandish of sabre and spear,
And the shout of fierce thousands in joyous ire :—
Silence—hark to the signal——fire!

XXIII.

As the wolves, that headlong go
On the stately buffalo,
Though with fiery eyes, and angry roar,
And hoofs that stamp, and horns that gore,
He tramples on earth, or tosses on high
The foremost, who rush on his strength but to die :
Thus against the wall they went,
Thus the first were backward bent;
Many a bosom, sheathed in brass,
Strewed the earth like broken glass,
Shivered by the shot, that tore
The ground whereon they moved no more :
Even as they fell, in files they lay,
Like the mower's grass at the close of day,
When his work is done on the levelled plain;
Such was the fall of the foremost slain.

XXIV.

As the spring-tides, with heavy plash,
From the cliffs invading dash
Huge fragments, sapped by the ceaseless flow,
Till white and thundering down they go,
Like the avalanche's snow
On the Alpine vales below;
Thus at length, outbreathed and worn,
Corinth's sons were downward borne
By the long and oft renewed
Charge of the Moslem multitude:

In firmness they stood, and in masses they fell,
Heaped, by the host of the Infidel,
Hand to hand, and foot to foot :
Nothing there, save Death, was mute ;
Stroke, and thrust, and flash, and cry
For quarter, or for victory,
Mingle there with the volleying thunder,
Which makes the distant cities wonder
How the sounding battle goes,
If with them, or for their foes ;
If they must mourn, or may rejoice
In that annihilating voice,
Which pierces the deep hills through and through
With an echo dread and new :
You might have heard it, on that day,
O'er Salamis and Megara ;
(We have heard the hearers say,)
Even unto Piræus bay.

XXV.

From the point of encountering blades to the hilt,
Sabres and swords with blood were gilt.
But the rampart is won, and the spoil begun,
And all but the after carnage done.
Shriller shrieks now mingling come
From within the plundered dome :
Hark to the haste of flying feet,
That splash in the blood of the slippery street ;
But here and there, where 'vantage ground
Against the foe may still be found,
Desperate groups, of twelve or ten,
Make a pause, and turn again—
With banded backs against the wall,
Fiercely stand, or fighting fall.

There stood an old man—his hairs were white,
But his veteran arm was full of might :
So gallantly bore he the brunt of the fray,
The dead before him, on that day,
In a semicircle lay;
Still he combated unwounded,
Though retreating, unsurrounded.
Many a scar of former fight
Lurked beneath his corslet bright;
But of every wound his body bore
Each and all had been ta'en before :
Though aged he was, so iron of limb,
Few of our youth could cope with him;
And the foes, whom he singly kept at bay,
Outnumbered his thin hairs of silver gray.
From right to left his sabre swept :
Many an Othman mother wept
Sons that were unborn, when dipped
His weapon first in Moslem' gore,
Ere his years could count a score.
Of all he might have been the sire
Who fell that day beneath his ire :
For, sonless left long years ago,
His wrath made many a childless foe;
And since the day, when in the strait
His only boy had met his fate,
His parent's iron hand did doom
More than a human hecatomb.
If shades by carnage be appeased,
Patroclus' spirit less was pleased
Than his Minotti's son, who died
Where Asia's bounds and ours divide.
Buried he lay, where thousands before
For thousands of years were inhumed on the shore :

What of them is left, to tell
Where they lie, and how they fell?
Not a stone on their turf, nor a bone in their graves;
But they live in the verse that immortally saves.

XXVI.

Hark to the Allah shout! a band
Of the Mussulman bravest and best is at hand:
Their leader's nervous arm is bare,
Swifter to smite, and never to spare—
Unclothed to the shoulder it waves them on
Thus in the fight is he ever known:
Others a gaudier garb may show,
To tempt the spoil of the greedy foe;
Many a hand's on a richer hilt,
But none on a steel more ruddily gilt;
Many a loftier turban may wear,—
Alp is but known by the white arm bare;
Look through the thick of the fight, 'tis there!
There is not a standard on that shore
So well advanced the ranks before;
There is not a banner in Moslem war
Will lure the Delhis half so far;
It glances like a falling star!
Where'er that mighty arm is seen,
The bravest be, or late have been;
There the craven cries for quarter
Vainly to the vengeful Tartar;
Or the hero, silent lying,
Scorns to yield a groan in dying;
Mustering his last feeble blow
'Gainst the nearest levelled foe,
Though faint beneath the mutual wound,
Grappling on the gory ground.

XXVII.

Still the old man stood erect,
And Alp's career a moment checked.

« Yield thee, Minotti; quarter take,
« For thine own, thy daughter's sake. »

« Never, renegado, never!

« Though the life of thy gift would last for ever. »

« Francesca!—O my promised bride!

« Must she too perish by thy pride? »

« She is safe. »—« Where? where? »—« In heaven;

« From whence thy traitor soul is driven—

« Far from thee, and undefiled. »

Grimly then Minotti smiled,
As he saw Alp staggering bow
Before his words, as with a blow.

« Oh God! when died she? »—« Yesternight—

« Nor weep I for her spirit's flight:

« None of my pure race shall be

« Slaves to Mahomet and thee—

« Come on! »—That challenge is in vain—

Alp's already with the slain!

While Minotti's words were wreaking

More revenge in bitter speaking

Than his falchion's point had found,

Had the time allowed to wound,

From within the neighbouring porch

Of a long defended church,

Where the last and desperate few

Would the failing fight renew,

The sharp shot dashed Alp to the ground;

Ere an eye could view the wound

That crashed through the brain of the infidel,
Round he spun, and down he fell;
A flash like fire within his eyes
Blazed, as he bent no more to rise,
And then eternal darkness sunk
Through all the palpitating trunk;
Nought of life left, save a quivering
Where his limbs were slightly shivering:
They turned him on his back; his breast
And brow were stained with gore and dust,
And through his lips the life-blood oozed,
From its deep veins lately loosed;
But in his pulse there was no throb,
Nor on his lips one dying sob;
Sigh, nor word, nor struggling breath
Heralded his way to death:
Ere his very thought could pray,
Unannealed he passed away,
Without a hope from mercy's aid,—
To the last a renegade.

XXVIII.

Fearfully the yell arose
Of his followers, and his foes;
These in joy, in fury those:
Then again in conflict mixing,
Clashing swords, and spears transfixing,
Interchanged the blow and thrust,
Hurling warriors in the dust.
Street by street, and foot by foot,
Still Minotti dares dispute
The latest portion of the land
Left beneath his high command;

With him, aiding heart and hand,
The remnant of his gallant band.
Still the church is tenable,

Whence issued late the fated ball
That half avenged the city's fall,
When Alp, her fierce assailant, fell :
Thither bending sternly back,
They leave before a bloody track ;
And, with their faces to the foe,
Dealing wounds with every blow,
The chief, and his retreating train,
Join to those within the fane :
There they yet may breathe awhile,
Sheltered by the massy pile.

XXIX.

Brief breathing-time ! the turbaned host,
With added ranks and raging boast,
Press onwards with such strength and heat,
Their numbers balk their own retreat ;
For narrow the way that led to the spot
Where still the Christians yielded not ;
And the foremost, if fearful, may vainly try
Through the massy column to turn and fly ;
They perforce must do or die.
They die ; but ere their eyes could close,
Avengers o'er their bodies rose ;
Fresh and furious, fast they fill
The ranks unthinned, though slaughtered still ;
And faint the weary Christians wax
Before the still renewed attacks :
And now the Othmans gain the gate ;
Still resists its iron weight,

And still, all deadly aimed and hot,
From every crevice comes the shot;
From every shattered window pour
The volleys of the sulphurous shower :
But the portal wavering grows and weak—
The iron yields, the hinges creak—
It bends—it falls—and all is o'er ;
Lost Corinth may resist no more !

XXX.

Darkly, sternly, and all alone,
Minotti stood o'er the altar stone :
Madonna's face upon him shone,
Painted in heavenly hues above,
With eyes of light and looks of love ;
And placed upon that holy shrine
To fix our thoughts on things divine,
When pictured there, we kneeling see
Her, and the boy-God on her knee,
Smiling sweetly on each prayer
To heaven, as if to waft it there.
Still she smiled ; even now she smiles,
Though slaughter streams along her aisles :
Minotti lifted his aged eye,
And made the sign of a cross with a sigh,
Then seized a torch which blazed thereby ;
And still he stood, while, with steel and flame,
Inward and onward the Mussulman came.

XXXI.

The vaults beneath the mosaic stone
Contained the dead of ages gone ;

Their names were on the graven floor,
But now illegible with gore ;
The carved crests, and curious hues
The varied marble's veins diffuse,
Were smeared, and slippery—stained, and strown
White broken swords, and helms o'erthrown :
There were dead above, and the dead below
Lay cold in many a confined row ;
You might see them piled in sable state,
By a pale light through a gloomy grate ;
But War had entered their dark caves,
And stored along the vaulted graves
Her sulphurous treasures, thickly spread
In masses by the fleshless dead :
Here, throughout the siege, had been
The Christian's chiefest magazine ;
To these a late formed train now led,
Minotti's last and stern resource
Against the foes o'erwhelming force.

XXXII.

The foe came on, and few remain
To strive, and those must strive in vain :
For lack of further lives, to slake
The thirst of vengeance now awake,
With barbarous blows they gash the dead,
And lop the already lifeless head,
And fell the statues from their niche,
And spoil the shrines of offerings rich,
And from each other's rude hands wrest
The silver vessels saints had blessed.
To the high altar on they go ;
Oh ! but it made a glorious show !

On its table still behold
The cup of consecrated gold ;
Massy and deep, a glittering prize,
Brightly it sparkles to plunderers' eyes :
That morn it held the holy wine,
Converted by Christ to his blood so divine,
Which his worshippers drank at the break of day,
To shrive their souls ere they joined in the fray.
Still a few drops within it lay ;
And round the sacred table glow
Twelve lofty lamps, in splendid row,
From the purest metal cast ;
A spoil—the richest, and the last.

XXXIII.

So near they came, the nearest stretched
To grasp the spoil he almost reached,
When old Minotti's hand
Touched with the torch the train—
'Tis fired !

Spire, vaults, the shrine, the spoil, the slain,
The turbaned victors, the Christian band,
All that of living or dead remain,
Hurled on high with the shivered fane,
In one wild roar expired !

The shattered town—the walls thrown down—
The waves a moment backward bent—
The hills that shake, although unrent,

As if an earthquake passed—
The thousand shapeless things all driven
In cloud and flame athwart the heaven

By that tremendous blast—
Proclaimed the desperate conflict o'er
On that too long afflicted shore :

Up to the sky like rockets go
All that mingled there below :
Many a tall and goodly man,
Scorched and shrivelled to a span,
When he fell to earth again
Like a cinder strewed the plain :
Down the ashes shower like rain ;
Some fell in the gulf, which received the sprinkles
With a thousand circling wrinkles ;
Some fell on the shore, but, far away,
Scattered o'er the isthmus lay ;
Christian or Moslem, which be they ?
Let their mothers see and say !
When in cradled rest they lay,
And each nursing mother smiled
On the sweet sleep of her child,
Little deemed she such a day
Would rend those tender limbs away.
Not the matrons that them bore
Could discern their offspring more ;
That one moment left no trace
More of human form or face,
Save a scattered scalp or bone :
And down came blazing rafters, strown
Around, and many a falling stone,
Deeply dented in the clay,
All blackened there and reeking lay.
All the living things that heard
That deadly earth shock disappeared :
The wild birds flew ; the wild dogs fled,
And howling left the unburied dead ;
The camels from their keepers broke ;
The distant steer forsook the yoke—

The nearer steed plunged o'er the plain,
And burst his girth, and tore his rein ;
The bull-frog's note, from out the marsh,
Deep-mouthed arose, and doubly harsh ;
The wolves yelled on the caverned hill,
Where echo rolled in thunder still ;
The jackal's troop, in gathered cry,¹⁰
Bayed from afar complainingly,
With a mixed and mournful sound,
Like crying babe and beaten hound :
With sudden wing, and ruffled breast,
The eagle left his rocky nest,
And mounted nearer to the sun,
The clouds beneath him seemed so dun ;
Their smoke assailed his startled beak,
And made him higher soar and shriek—

Thus was Corinth lost and won !

NOTES.

Note 1, page 6, line 17.

The Turcoman hath left his herd.

The life of the Turcomans is wandering and patriarchal : they dwell in tents.

Note 2, page 8, line 13.

Coumourgi—he whose closing scene.

Ali Comourgi, the favourite of three sultans, and grand vizier to Achmet III, after recovering Peloponnesus from the Venetians in one campaign, was mortally wounded in the next, against the Germans, at the battle of Peterwaradin, (in the plain of Carlowitz) in Hungary, endeavouring to rally his guards. He died of his wounds next day. His last order was the decapitation of general Breuner, and some other German prisoners ; and his last words, « Oh that I « could thus serve all the Christian dogs ! » a speech and act not unlike one of Caligula. He was a young man of great ambition and unbounded presumption : on being told that prince Eugene, then opposed to him, « was a great general, » he said, « I shall become a greater, and at his expense. »

Note 3, page 17, line 21.

There shrinks no ebb in that tideless sea.

The reader need hardly be reminded that there are no perceptible tides in the Mediterranean.

Note 4, page 18, line 23.

And their white tusks crunched o'er the whiter skull.

This spectacle I have seen, such as described, beneath the wall of the Seraglio at Constantinople; in the little cavities

worn by the Bosphorus in the rock, a narrow terrace of which projects between the wall and the water. I think the fact is also mentioned in Hobhouse's Travels. The bodies were probably those of some refractory Janizaries.

Note 5, page 18, line 32.

And each scalp had a single long tuft of hair.

This tuft, or long lock, is left from a superstition that Mahomet will draw them into Paradise by it.

Note 6, page 20, line 23.

Was it the wind, through some hollow stone.

I must here acknowledge a close, though unintentional, resemblance in these twelve lines to a passage in an unpublished poem of Mr. Coleridge, called « Christabel. » It was not till after these lines were written that I heard that wild and singularly original and beautiful poem recited ; and the MS. of that production I never saw till very recently, by the kindness of Mr. Coleridge himself, who, I hope, is convinced that I have not been a wilful plagiarist. The original idea undoubtedly pertains to Mr. Coleridge, whose poem has been composed above fourteen years. Let me conclude by a hope that he will not longer delay the publication of a production, of which I can only add my mite of approbation to the applause of far more competent judges.

Note 7, page 24, line 20.

There is a light cloud by the moon—

I have been told that the idea expressed from lines 19 to 25 has been admired by those whose approbation is valuable. I am glad of it: but it is not original—at least not mine ; it may be found much better expressed in pages 182-3-4 of the English version of « Vathek » (I forget the precise page of the French), a work to which I have before referred ; and never recur to, or read, without a renewal of gratification.

Note 8, page 26, line 3.

The horsetails are plucked from the ground, and the sword.

The horsetail, fixed upon a lance, a Pasha's standard.

Note 9, page 29, line 25.

And since the day, when in the strait.

In the naval battle at the mouth of the Dardanelles, between the Venetians and the Turks.

Note 10, page 38, line 7.

The jackal's troop, in gathered cry.

I believe I have taken a poetical licence to transplant the jackal from Asia. In Greece I never saw nor heard these animals; but among the ruins of Ephesus I have heard them by hundreds. They haunt ruins, and follow armies.

MANERED,

A DRAMATIC POEM.

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MANFRED,
CLARENCE HERBERT,
ABBOT OF ST. MARC.

MANFRED,
A DRAMATIC POEM.

« There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
« Than are dreamt of in your philosophy. »

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MANFRED.

CHAMOIS HUNTER.

ABBOT OF ST. MAURICE.

MANUEL.

HERMAN.

WITCH OF THE ALPS.

ARIMANES.

NEMESIS.

The DESTINIES.

SPIRITS, etc.

*The Scene of the Drama is amongst the Higher Alps—
partly in the Castle of Manfred, and partly in the
Mountains.*

MANFRED.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

MANFRED *alone.*

(Scene, a Gothic gallery—Time, Midnight.)

MANFRED.

THE lamp must be replenish'd, but even then
It will not burn so long as I must watch :
My slumbers—if I slumber—are not sleep,
But a continuance of enduring thought,
Which then I can resist not : in my heart
There is a vigil, and these eyes but close
To look within ; and yet I live, and bear
The aspect and the form of breathing men.
But grief should be the instructor of the wise ;
Sorrow is knowledge : they who know the most
Must mourn the deepest o'er the fatal truth :
The Tree of Knowledge is not that of Life.
Philosophy and science, and the springs
Of wonder, and the wisdom of the world,
I have essayed, and in my mind there is
A power to make these subject to itself—

But they avail not : I have done men good,
 And I have met with good even among men—
 But this avail'd not : I have had my foes,
 And none have baffled, many fallen before me—
 But this avail'd not :—Good, or evil, life,
 Powers, passions, all I see in other beings,
 Have been to me as rain unto the sands,
 Since that all-nameless hour. I have no dread,
 And feel the curse to have no natural fear,
 Nor fluttering throb, that beats with hopes or wishes,
 Or lurking love of something on the earth.—
 Now to my task.—

Mysterious agency !

Ye spirits of the unbounded Universe !
 Whom I have sought in darkness and in light—
 Ye, who do compass earth about, and dwell
 In subtler essence—ye, to whom the tops
 Of mountains inaccessible are haunts,
 And earth's and ocean's caves familiar things—
 I call upon ye by the written charm
 Which gives me power upon you——Rise ! appear !
(*A pause.*)

They come not yet.—Now by the voice of him
 Who is the first among you—by this sign,
 Which makes you tremble—by the claims of him
 Who is undying,—Rise ! appear !——Appear !
(*A pause.*)

If it be so—Spirits of earth and air,
 Ye shall not thus elude me : by a power,
 Deeper than all yet urged, a tyrant-spell,
 Which had its birth-place in a star condemn'd,
 The burning wreck of a demolish'd world,
 A wandering hell in the eternal space ;
 By the strong curse which is upon my soul,

The thought which is within me and around me,
I do compel ye to my will.—Appear!

(A star is seen at the darker end of the gallery; it is stationary; and a voice is heard singing.)

FIRST SPIRIT.

Mortal! to thy bidding bow'd,
From my mansion in the cloud,
Which the breath of twilight builds,
And the summer's sun-set gilds
With the azure and vermilion
Which is mix'd for my pavilion;
Though thy quest may be forbidden,
On a star-beam I have ridden;
To thine adjuration bow'd,
Mortal—be thy wish avow'd!

Voice of the SECOND SPIRIT.

Mont Blanc is the monarch of mountains,
They crowned him long ago
On a throne of rocks, in a robe of clouds,
With a diadem of snow.
Around his waist are forests braced,
The avalanche in his hand;
But ere it fall, that thundering ball
Must pause for my command.
The glacier's cold and restless mass
Moves onward day by day;
But I am he who bids it pass,
Or with its ice delay.
I am the spirit of the place,
Could make the mountain bow
And quiver to his cavern'd base—
And what with me would'st Thou?

Voice of the THIRD SPIRIT.

In the blue depth of the waters,
 Where the wave hath no strife,
 Where the wind is a stranger,
 And the sea-snake hath life,
 Where the mermaid is decking
 Her green hair with shells,
 Like the storm on the surface
 Came the sound of thy spells ;
 O'er my calm hall of coral
 The deep echo roll'd :
 To the spirit of Ocean
 Thy wishes unfold !

FOURTH SPIRIT.

Where the slumbering earthquake
 Lies pillow'd on fire,
 And the lakes of bitumen
 Rise boilingly higher ;
 Where the roots of the Andes
 Strike deep in the earth,
 As their summits to heaven
 Shoot soaringly forth ;
 I have quitted my birth-place,
 Thy bidding to bide—
 Thy spell hath subdued me,
 Thy will be my guide !

FIFTH SPIRIT.

I am the rider of the wind,
 The stirrer of the storm ;
 The hurricane I left behind
 Is yet with lightning warm ;

To speed to thee, o'er shore and sea
I swept upon the blast:
The fleet I met sailed well, and yet
'Twill sink ere night be past.

SIXTH SPIRIT.

My dwelling is the shadow of the night,
Why doth thy magic torture me with light?

SEVENTH SPIRIT.

The star which rules thy destiny,
Was ruled, ere earth began, by me:
It was a world as fresh and fair
As e'er revolved round sun in air;
Its course was free and regular,
Space bosom'd not a lovelier star.
The hour arrived—and it became
A wandering mass of shapeless flame,
A pathless comet, and a curse,
The menace of the universe;
Still rolling on with innate force,
Without a sphere, without a course,
A bright deformity on high,
The monster of the upper sky!
And thou, beneath its influence born—
Thou worm! whom I obey and scorn—
Forced by a power (which is not thine,
And lent thee but to make thee mine)
For this brief moment to descend,
Where these weak spirits round thee bend
And parley with a thing like thee—
What would'st thou, Child of Clay! with me?

THE SEVEN SPIRITS.

Earth, ocean, air, night, mountains, winds, thy star,
 Are at thy beck and bidding, Child of Clay!
 Before thee at thy quest their spirits are—
 What would'st thou with us, son of mortals—say?

MANFRED.

Forgetfulness——

FIRST SPIRIT.

Of what—of whom—and why?

MANFRED.

Of that which is within me; read it there—
 Ye know it, and I cannot utter it.

SPIRIT.

We can but give thee that which we possess :
 Ask of us subjects, sovereignty, the power
 O'er earth, the whole, or portion, or a sign
 Which shall control the elements, whereof
 We are the dominators, each and all,
 These shall be thine.

MANFRED.

Oblivion, self-oblivion—
 Can ye not wring from out the hidden realms
 Ye offer so profusely what I ask?

SPIRIT.

It is not in our essence, in our skill ;
 But—thou may'st die.

MANFRED.

Will Death bestow it on me ?

SPIRIT.

We are immortal, and do not forge ;
 We are eternal ; and to us the past
 Is, as the future, present. Art thou answered ?

MANFRED.

Ye mock me—but the power which brought ye here
 Hath made you mine. Slaves, scoff not at my will !
 The mind, the spirit, the Promethean spark,
 The lightning of my being, is as bright,
 Pervading, and far-darting as your own,
 And shall not yield to yours, though coop'd in clay !
 Answer, or I will teach ye what I am.

SPIRIT.

We answer as we answered ; our reply
 Is even in thine own words.

MANFRED.

Why say ye so ?

SPIRIT.

If, as thou say'st, thine essence be as ours,
 We have replied in telling thee, the thing
 Mortals call Death hath nought to do with us.

MANFRED.

I then have call'd ye from your realms in vain ;
 Ye cannot, or ye will not, aid me.

SPIRIT.

Say ;

What we possess we offer ; it is thine :
 Bethink ere thou dismiss us ; ask again—
 Kingdom, and sway, and strength, and length of days—

MANFRED.

Accursed ! what have I to do with days ?
They are too long already.—Hence—begone !

SPIRIT.

Yet pause : being here, our will would do thee service ;
Bethink thee, is there then no other gift
Which we can make not worthless in thine eyes ?

MANFRED.

No, none : yet stay—one moment, ere we part—
I would behold ye face to face. I hear
Your voices, sweet and melancholy sounds,
As music on the waters ; and I see
The steady aspect of a clear large star,
But nothing more. Approach me as ye are,
Or one, or all, in your accustom'd forms.

SPIRIT.

We have no forms beyond the elements
Of which we are the mind and principle :
But choose a form—in that we will appear.

MANFRED.

I have no choice ; there is no form on earth
Hideous or beautiful to me. Let him,
Who is most powerful of ye, take such aspect
As unto him may seem most fitting—Come !

SEVENTH SPIRIT (*Appearing in the shape of a beautiful female figure.*)

Behold !

MANFRED.

Oh God ! if it be thus, and *thou*
Art not a madness and a mockery,
I yet might be most happy.—I will clasp thee,
And we again will be——

(*The figure vanishes.*)

My heart is crush'd !

(*MANFRED falls senseless.*)

(*A VOICE is heard in the incantation which follows.*)

When the moon is on the wave,
And the glow-worm in the grass,
And the meteor on the grave,
And the wisp on the morass ;
When the falling stars are shooting,
And the answer'd owls are hooting,
And the silent leaves are still
In the shadow of the hill,
Shall my soul be upon thine,
With a power and with a sign.

Though thy slumber may be deep,
Yet thy spirit shall not sleep ;
There are shades which will not vanish,
There are thoughts thou canst not banish ;
By a power to thee unknown,
Thou canst never be alone ;
Thou art wrapt as with a shroud,
Thou art gathered in a cloud ;
And for ever shalt thou dwell
In the spirit of this spell.

Though thou seest me not pass by,
Thou shalt feel me with thine eye
As a thing that, though unseen,
Must be near thee, and hath been ;
And when in that secret dread
Thou hast turn'd around thy head,
Thou shalt marvel I am not
As thy shadow on the spot,
And the power which thou dost feel
Shall be what thou must conceal.

And a magic voice and verse
Hath baptized thee with a curse ;
And a spirit of the air
Hath begirt thee with a snare ;
In the wind there is a voice
Shall forbid thee to rejoice ;
And to thee shall Night deny
All the quiet of her sky ;
And the Day shall have a sun,
Which shall make thee wish it done.

From thy false tears I did distil
An essence which hath strength to kill ;
From thy own heart I then did wring
The black blood in its blackest spring ;
From thy own smile I snatch'd the snake,
For there it coil'd as in a brake ;
From thy own lip I drew the charm
Which gave all these their chiefest harm ;
In proving every poison known,
I found the strongest was thine own.

By thy cold breast and serpent smile,
By thy unfathom'd gulfs of guile,
By that most seeming virtuous eye,
By thy shut soul's hypocrisy;
By the perfection of thine art
Which pass'd for human thine own heart;
By thy delight in others' pain,
And by thy brotherhood of Cain,
I call upon thee ! and compel
Thyself to be thy proper Hell !

And on thy head I pour the vial
Which doth devote thee to this trial ;
Nor to slumber, nor to die,
Shall be in thy destiny ;
Though thy death shall still seem near
To thy wish, but as a fear ;
Lo ! the spell now works around thee,
And the clankless chain hath bound thee ;
O'er thy heart and brain together
Hath the word been pass'd—now wither !

SCENE II.

The Mountain of the Jung-frau.—Time, Morning.—

MANFRED alone upon the cliffs.

MANFRED.

The spirits I have raised abandon me—
The spells which I have studied baffle me—
The remedy I reck'd of tortured me ;
I lean no more on super-human aid,
It hath no power upon the past, and for
The future, till the past be gulf'd in darkness,
It is not of my search.—My mother Earth !

And thou, fresh breaking Day, and you, ye Mountains,
Why are ye beautiful? I cannot love ye.
And thou, the bright eye of the universe,
That openest over all, and unto all
Art a delight—thou shin'st not on my heart.
And you, ye crags, upon whose extreme edge
I stand, and on the torrent's brink beneath
Behold the tall pines dwindled as to shrubs
In dizziness of distance; when a leap,
A stir, a motion, even a breath, would bring
My breast upon its rocky bosom's bed
To rest for ever—wherefore do I pause?
I feel the impulse—yet I do not plunge;
I see the perils—yet do not recede;
'And my brain reels— and yet my foot is firm:
There is a power upon me which withholds
And makes it my fatality to live;
If it be life to wear within myself
This barrenness of spirit, and to be
My own soul's sepulchre, for I have ceased
To justify my deeds unto myself—
The last infirmity of evil. Ay,
Thou winged and cloud-cleaving minister,

(*An eagle passes.*)

Whose happy flight is highest into heaven,
Well may'st thou swoop so near me—I should be
Thy prey, and gorge thine eaglets; thou art gone
Where the eye cannot follow thee; but thine
Yet pierces downward, onward, or above,
With a pervading vision.—Beautiful!
How beautiful is all this visible world!
How glorious in its action and itself;
But we, who name ourselves its sovereigns, we,
Half dust, half deity, alike unfit

To sink or soar, with our mix'd essence make
 A conflict of its elements, and breathe
 The breath of degradation and of pride,
 Contending with low wants and lofty will,
 Till our mortality predominates,
 And men are—what they name not to themselves,
 And trust not to each other. Hark! the note,

(The shepherd's pipe in the distance is heard.)

The natural music of the mountain reed—
 For here the patriarchal days are not
 A pastoral fable—pipes in the liberal air,
 Mix'd with the sweet bells of the sauntering herd;
 My soul would drink those echoes.—Oh! that I were
 The viewless spirit of a lovely sound,
 A living voice, a breathing harmony,
 A bodiless enjoyment—born and dying
 With the blest tone which made me!

(Enter from below a CHAMOIS HUNTER.)

CHAMOIS HUNTER.

Even so
 This way the chamois leapt: her nimble feet
 Have baffled me; my gains to-day will scarce
 Repay my break-neck travail—What is here?
 Who seems not of my trade, and yet hath reach'd
 A height which none even of our mountaineers,
 Save our best hunters, may attain: his garb
 Is goodly, his mien manly, and his air
 Proud as a free-born peasant's, at this distance.—
 I will approach him nearer.

MANFRED *(not perceiving the other.)*

To be thus—

Grey-hair'd with anguish, like these blasted pines,

Wrecks of a single winter, barkless, branchless,
 A blighted trunk upon a cursed root,
 Which but supplies a feeling to decay—
 And to be thus, eternally but thus,
 Having been otherwise! Now furrow'd o'er
 With wrinkles, plough'd by moments, not by years;
 And hours—all tortured into ages—hours
 Which I outlive!—Ye toppling crags of ice!
 Ye avalanches, whom a breath draws down
 In mountainous o'erwhelming, come and crush me!
 I hear ye momentarily above, beneath,
 Crash with a frequent conflict; but ye pass,
 And only fall on things which still would live;
 On the young flourishing forest, or the hut
 And hamlet of the harmless villager.

CHAMOIS HUNTER.

The mists begin to rise from up the valley;
 I'll warn him to descend, or he may chance
 To lose at once his way and life together.

MANFRED.

The mists boil up around the glaciers; clouds
 Rise curling fast beneath me, white and sulphury,
 Like foam from the roused ocean of deep Hell,
 Whose every wave breaks on a living shore,
 Heaped with the damn'd like pebbles.—I am giddy.

CHAMOIS HUNTER.

I must approach him cautiously; if near,
 A sudden step will startle him, and he
 Seems tottering already.

MANFRED.

Mountains have fallen,
Leaving a gap in the clouds, and with the shock
Rocking their Alpine brethren; filling up
The ripe green valleys with destruction's splinters;
Damming the rivers with a sudden dash,
Which crush'd the waters into mist, and made
Their fountains find another channel—thus,
Thus, in its old age, did Mount Rosenberg—
Why stood I not beneath it?

CHAMOIS HUNTER.

Friend! have a care,
Your next step may be fatal!—for the love
Of him who made you, stand not on that brink!

MANFRED (*not hearing him.*)

Such would have been for me a fitting tomb;
My bones had then been quiet in their depth;
They had not then been strewn upon the rocks
For the wind's pastime—as thus—thus they shall be—
In this one plunge.—Farewell, ye opening heavens
Look not upon me thus reproachfully—
Ye were not meant for me—Earth! take these atoms!

(*As MANFRED is in act to spring from the cliff, the
CHAMOIS HUNTER seizes and retains him with a
sudden grasp.*)

CHAMOIS HUNTER.

Hold, madman!—though aweary of thy life,
Stain not our pure vales with thy guilty blood.—
Away with me——I will not quit my hold.

MANFRED.

I am most sick at heart—nay, grasp me not—
I am all feebleness—the mountains whirl,
Spinning around me—I grow blind—What art thou?

CHAMOIS HUNTER.

I'll answer that anon.—Away with me—
The clouds grow thicker—there—now lean on me—
Place your foot here—here, take this staff, and cling
A moment to that shrub—now give me your hand,
And hold fast by my girdle—softly—well—
The chalet will be gained within an hour—
Come on, we'll quickly find a surer footing,
And something like a pathway, which the torrent
Hath wash'd since winter.—Come, 'tis bravely done—
You should have been a hunter.—Follow me.

(*As they descend the rocks with difficulty, the
scene closes.*)

END OF ACT THE FIRST.

MANFRED.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A Cottage amongst the Bernese Alps.

MANFRED *and the* CHAMOIS HUNTER.

CHAMOIS HUNTER.

No, no—yet pause—thou must not yet go forth :
Thy mind and body are alike unfit
To trust each other, for some hours, at least ;
When thou art better, I will be thy guide—
But whither ?

MANFRED.

It imports not : I do know
My route full well, and need no further guidance.

CHAMOIS HUNTER.

Thy garb and gait bespeak thee of high lineage—
One of the many chiefs, whose castled crags
Look o'er the lower valleys—which of these
May call thee Lord ? I only know their portals ;
My way of life leads me but rarely down
To bask by the huge hearths of those old halls,
Carousing with the vassals ; but the paths,
Which step from out our mountains to their door,
I know from childhood—which of these is thine ?

MANFRED.

No matter.

CHAMOIS HUNTER.

Well, Sir, pardon me the question,
And be of better cheer. Come, taste my wine;
'Tis of an ancient vintage; many a day
'T has thawed my veins among our glaciers, now
Let it do thus for thine—Come, pledge me fairly.

MANFRED.

Away, away! there's blood upon the brim!
Will it then never—never sink in the earth?

CHAMOIS HUNTER.

What dost thou mean? thy senses wander from thee.

MANFRED.

I say 'tis blood—my blood! the pure warm stream
Which ran in the veins of my fathers, and in ours
When we were in our youth, and had one heart,
And loved each other as we should not love,
And this was shed: but still it rises up,
Colouring the clouds, that shut me out from heaven,
Where thou art not—and I shall never be.

CHAMOIS HUNTER.

Man of strange words, and some halfmaddening sin,
Which makes thee people vacancy, whate'er
Thy dread and sufferance be, there's comfort yet—
The aid of holy men, and heavenly patience——

MANFRED.

Patience and patience! Hence—that word was made
For brutes of burthen, not for birds of prey;
Preach it to mortals of a dust like thine,—
I am not of thine order.

CHAMOIS HUNTER.

Thanks to heaven!

I would not be of thine for the free fame
Of William Tell; but whatsoe'er thine ill,
It must be borne, and these wild starts are useless.

MANFRED.

Do I not bear it?—Look on me—I live.

CHAMOIS HUNTER.

This is convulsion, and no healthful life.

MANFRED.

I tell thee, man! I have lived many years,
Many long years, but they are nothing now
To those which I must number: ages—ages—
Space and eternity—and consciousness,
With the fierce thirst of death—and still unslaked!

CHAMOIS HUNTER.

Why, on thy brow the seal of middle age
Hath scarce been set; I am thine elder far.

MANFRED.

Think'st thou existence doth depend on time?
It doth; but actions are our epochs: mine
Have made my days and nights imperishable,

Endless, and all alike, as sands on' the shore,
Innumerable atoms; and one desert,
Barren and cold, on which the wild waves break,
But nothing rests, save carcasses and wrecks,
Rocks, and the salt-surf weeds of bitterness.

CHAMOIS HUNTER.

Alas! he's mad—but yet I must not leave him.

MANFRED.

I would I were—for then the things I see
Would be but a distempered dream.

CHAMOIS HUNTER.

What is it
That thou dost see, or think thou look'st upon?

MANFRED.

Myself, and thee—a peasant of the Alps—
Thy humble virtues, hospitable home,
And spirit patient, pious, proud and free;
Thy self-respect, grafted on innocent thoughts;
Thy days of health, and nights of sleep; thy toils,
By danger dignified, yet guiltless; hopes
Of cheerful old age and a quiet grave,
With cross and garland over its green turf,
And thy grand children's love for epitaph;
This do I see—and then I look within—
It matters not—my soul was scorch'd already!

CHAMOIS HUNTER.

And would'st thou then exchange thy lot for mine?

MANFRED.

No, friend! I would not wrong thee, nor exchange

My lot with living being : I can bear—
 However wretchedly, 'tis still to bear
 In life what others could not brook to dream,
 But perish in their slumber

CHAMOIS HUNTER.

And with this—
 This cautious feeling for another's pain,
 Canst thou be black with evil?—say not so
 Can one of gentle thoughts have wreak'd revenge
 Upon his enemies?

MANFRED.

Oh! no, no, no!
 My injuries came down on those who loved me—
 On those whom I best loved : I never quell'd
 An enemy, save in my just defence—
 But my embrace was fatal.

CHAMOIS HUNTER.

Heaven give thee rest!
 And penitence to restore thee to thyself;
 My prayers shall be for thee.

MANFRED.

I need them not,
 But can endure thy pity. I depart—
 'Tis time—farewell!—Here's gold, and thanks for thee—
 No words—it is thy due.—Follow me not—
 I know my path—the mountain peril's past :—
 And once again, I charge thee, follow not!

(Exit MANFRED.)

SCENE II.

A lower Valley in the Alps.—A Cataract.

Enter MANFRED.

It is not noon—the sunbow's rays ' still arch
The torrent with the many hues of heaven,
And roll the sheeted silver's waving column
O'er the crag's headlong perpendicular,
And fling its lines of foaming light along,
And to and fro, like the pale courser's tail,
The Giant steed, to be bestrode by Death ,
As told in the Apocalypse. No eyes
But mine now drink this sight of loveliness ;
I should be sole in this sweet solitude,
And with the Spirit of the place divide
The homage of these waters.—I will call her.

(MANFRED takes some of the water into the palm of his hand, and flings it in the air, muttering the adjuration. After a pause, the WITCH OF THE ALPS rises beneath the arch of the sunbeam of the torrent.)

MANFRED.

Beautiful Spirit ! with thy hair of light,
And dazzling eyes of glory, in whose form
The charms of Earth's least mortal daughters grow
To an unearthly stature, in an essence
Of purer elements ; while the hues of youth,
Carnation'd like a sleeping infant's cheek,
Rock'd by the beating of her mother's heart,
Or the rose tints, which summer's twilight leaves
Upon the lofty glacier's virgin snow,
The blush of earth embracing with her heaven,—

Tinge thy celestial aspect, and make tame
The beauties of the sunbow which bends o'er thee.
Beautiful Spirit! in thy calm clear brow,
Wherein is glass'd serenity of soul,
Which of itself shows immortality,
I read that thou wilt pardon to a Son
Of Earth, whom the abstruser powers permit
At times to commune with them—if that he
Avail him of his spells—to call thee thus,
And gaze on thee a moment.

WITCH.

Son of Earth!

I know thee, and the powers which give thee power;
I know thee for a man of many thoughts,
And deeds of good and ill, extreme in both,
Fatal and fated in thy sufferings.
I have expected this—what would'st thou with me?

MANFRED.

To look upon thy beauty—nothing further.
The face of the Earth hath madden'd me, and I
Take refuge in her mysteries, and pierce
To the abodes of those who govern her—
But they can nothing aid me. I have sought
From them what they could not bestow, and now
I search no further.

WITCH.

What could be the quest
Which is not in the power of the most powerful,
The rulers of the invisible?

MANFRED.

A boon;

But why should I repeat it? 'twere in vain.

WITCH.

I know not that ; let thy lips utter it.

MANFRED.

Well, though it torture me, 'tis but the same ;
My pang shall find a voice. From my youth upwards
My spirit walk'd not with the souls of men,
Nor look'd upon the Earth with human eyes ;
The thirst of their ambition was not mine ;
The aim of their existence was not mine ;
My joys, my griefs, my passions, and my powers,
Made me a stranger ; though I wore the form,
I had no sympathy with breathing flesh,
Nor midst the creatures of clay that girded me
Was there but one who——but of her anon.
I said, with men, and with the thoughts of men,
I held but slight communion ; but instead,
My joy was in the wilderness, to breathe
The difficult air of the iced mountain's top,
Where the birds dare not build, nor insect's wing
Flit o'er the herbless granite ; or to plunge
Into the torrent, and to roll along
On the swift whirl of the new breaking wave
Of river-stream, or ocean, in their flow.
In these my early strength exulted ; or
To follow through the night the moving moon,
The stars and their developement ; or catch
The dazzling lightnings till my eyes grew dim ;
Or to look, list'ning, on the scattered leaves,
While Autumn winds were at their evening song.
These were my pastimes, and to be alone ;
For if the beings, of whom I was one,—
Hating to be so,—cross'd me in my path,

I felt myself degraded back to them,
And was all clay again. And then I dived,
In my lone wanderings, to the caves of Death,
Searching its cause in its effect; and drew
From wither'd bones, and skulls, and heap'd up dust,
Conclusions most forbidden. Then I pass'd
The nights of years in sciences untaught,
Save in the old-time; and with time and toil,
And terrible ordeal, and such penance
As in itself hath power upon the air,
And spirits that do compass air and earth,
Space, and the peopled infinite, I made
Mine eyes familiar with eternity,
Such as, before me, did the Magi, and
He who from out their fountain dwellings raised
Eros and Anteros², at Gadara,
As I do thee; and with my knowledge grew
The thirst of knowledge, and the power and joy
Of this most bright intelligence, until——

WITCH.

Proceed.

MANFRED.

Oh! I but thus prolonged my words,
Boasting these idle attributes, because
As I approach the core of my heart's grief—
But to my task. I have not named to thee
Father or mother, mistress, friend, or being,
With whom I wore the chain of human ties;
If I had such, they seem'd not such to me—
Yet there was one——

WITCH.

Spare not thyself—proceed.

MANFRED.

She was like me in lineaments—her eyes,
 Her hair, her features, all, to the very tone
 Even of her voice, they said, were like to mine;
 But soften'd all, and temper'd into beauty;
 She had the same lone thoughts and wanderings,
 The quest of hidden knowledge, and a mind
 To comprehend the universe: nor these
 Alone, but with them gentler powers than mine,
 Pity, and smiles, and tears—which I had not;
 And tenderness—but that I had for her;
 Humility—and that I never had.
 Her faults were mine—her virtues were her own—
 I loved her, and destroy'd her!

WITCH.

With thy hand?

MANFRED.

Not with my hand, but heart—which broke her heart—
 It gazed on mine, and withered. I have shed
 Blood, but not hers—and yet her blood was shed—
 I saw—and could not staunch it.

WITCH.

And for this—

A being of the race thou dost despise,
 The order which thine own would rise above,
 Mingling with us and ours, thou dost forego
 The gifts of our great knowledge, and shrink'st back
 To recreant mortality——Away!

MANFRED.

Daughter of Air! I tell thee, since that hour—
 But words are breath—look on me in my sleep,

Or watch my watchings—Come and sit by me!
 My solitude is solitude no more,
 But peopled with the Furies :—I have gnash'd
 My teeth in darkness till returning morn,
 Then cursed myself till sunset ;—I have pray'd
 For madness as a blessing—'tis denied me.
 I have affronted death—but in the war
 Of elements the waters shrunk from me,
 And fatal things pass'd harmless—the cold hand
 Of an all-pitiless demon held me back,
 Back by a single hair, which would not break.
 In phantasy, imagination, all
 The affluence of my soul—which one day was
 A Croesus in creation—I plunged deep,
 But, like an ebbing wave, it dash'd me back
 Into the gulf of my unfathom'd thought.
 I plunged amidst mankind—Forgetfulness
 I sought in all, save where 'tis to be found,
 And that I have to learn—my sciences,
 My long pursued and super-human art,
 Is mortal here—I dwell in my despair—
 And live—and live for ever.

WITCH.

It may be
 That I can aid thee.

MANFRED.

To do this thy power
 Must wake the dead, or lay me low with them.
 Do so in any shape—in any hour—
 With any torture—so it be the last.

WITCH.

That is not in my province; but if thou
Wilt swear obedience to my will, and do
My bidding, it may help thee to thy wishes.

MANFRED.

I will not swear—Obey! and whom? the spirits
Whose presence I command, and be the slave
Of those who served me—Never!

WITCH.

Is this all!
Hast thou no gentler answer?—Yet bethink thee,
And pause ere thou rejectest.

MANFRED.

I have said it.

WITCH.

Enough!—I may retire then—say!

MANFRED.

Retire!

*(The WITCH disappears.)*MANFRED *(alone.)*

We are the fools of time and terror. Days
Steal on us and steal from us; yet we live,
Loathing our life, and dreading still to die.
In all the days of this detested yoke—
This vital weight upon the struggling heart,
Which sinks with sorrow, or beats quick with pain,
Or joy that ends in agony or faintness—
In all the days of past and future, for
In life there is no present, we can number

How few—how less than few—wherein the soul
Forbears to pant for death, and yet draws back
As from a stream in winter, though the chill
Be but a moment's. I have one resource
Still in my science—I can call the dead,
And ask them what it is we dread to be :
The sternest answer can but be the grave,
And that is nothing—if they answer not—
The buried Prophet answered to the Hag
Of Endor ; and the Spartan Monarch drew
From the Byzantine maid's unsleeping spirit
An answer and his destiny—he slew
That which he loved, unknowing what he slew,
And died unpardon'd—though he call'd in aid
The Phyxian Jove, and in Phigalia roused
The Arcadian Evocators to compel
The indignant shadow to depose her wrath,
Or fix her term of vengeance—she replied
In words of dubious import, but fulfill'd³.

If I had never lived, that which I love
Had still been living ; had I never loved,
That which I love would still be beautiful—
Happy and giving happiness. What is she ?
What is she now ?—a sufferer for my sins—
A thing I dare not think upon—or nothing.
Within few hours I shall not call in vain—
Yet in this hour I dread the thing I dare :
Until this hour I never shrunk to gaze
On spirit, good and evil—now I tremble,
And feel a strange cold thaw upon my heart,
But I can act even what I most abhor,
And champion human fears.—The night approaches.

(Exit.)

SCENE III.

The summit of the Jung-frau Mountain.

Enter FIRST DESTINY.

The moon is rising broad, and round, and bright ;
And here on snows, where never human foot
Of common mortal trod, we nightly tread,
And leave no traces ; o'er the savage sea,
The glassy ocean of the mountain ice,
We skim its rugged breakers, which put on
The aspect of a tumbling tempest's foam,
Frozen in a moment—a dead whirlpool's image ;
And this most steep fantastic pinnacle,
The fretwork of some earthquake—where the clouds
Pause to repose themselves in passing by—
Is sacred to our revels, or our vigils ;
Here do I wait my sisters, on our way
To the Hall of Arimanes, for to-night
Is our great festival—'tis strange they come not.

A Voice without, singing.

The Captive Usurper,
Hurl'd down from the throne,
Lay buried in torpor,
Forgotten and lone ;
I broke through his slumbers,
I shivered his chain,
I leagued him with numbers—
He's Tyrant again !

With the blood of a million he'll answer my care,
With a nation's destruction—his flight and despair.

Second Voice, without.

The ship sail'd on, the ship sail'd fast,
But I left not a sail, and I left not a mast;
There is not a plank of the hull or the deck,
And there is not a wretch to lament o'er his wreck;
Save one, whom I held, as he swam, by the hair,
And he was a subject well worthy my care;
A traitor on land, and a pirate at sea—
But I saved him to wreak further havoc for me!

FIRST DESTINY, answering.

The city lies sleeping;
The morn, to deplore it,
May dawn on it weeping.
Sullenly, slowly,
The black plague flew o'er it—
Thousands lie lowly;
Tens of thousands shall perish—
The living shall fly from
The sick they should cherish;
But nothing can vanquish
The touch that they die from.
Sorrow and anguish,
And evil and dread,
Envelope a nation—
The blest are the dead,
Who see not the sight
Of their own desolation.—
This work of a night,
This wreck of a realm—this deed of my doing—
For ages I've done, and shall still be renewing!

(*Enter the SECOND and THIRD DESTINIES.*)

THE THREE.

Our hands contain the hearts of men,
 Our footsteps are their graves ;
 We only give to take again
 The spirits of our slaves !

FIRST DESTINY.

Welcome !—Where's Nemesis ?

SECOND DESTINY.

At some great work ;
 But what I know not, for my hands were full.

THIRD DESTINY.

Behold she cometh.

(*Enter NEMESIS.*)

FIRST DESTINY.

Say, where hast thou been ?
 My sisters and thyself are slow to night.

NEMESIS.

I was detain'd repairing shattered thrones,
 Marrying fools, restoring dynasties,
 Avenging men upon their enemies,
 And making them repent their own revenge ;
 Goadng the wise to madness ; from the dull
 Shaping out oracles to rule the world
 Afresh, for they were waxing out of date,
 And mortals dared to ponder for themselves,
 To weigh kings in the balance, and to speak
 Of freedom, the forbidden fruit.—Away !
 We have outstaid the hour—mount we our clouds !
 (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE IV.

The Hall of Arimanes—Arimanes on his throne, a globe of fire, surrounded by the Spirits.

HYMN OF THE SPIRITS.

Hail to our Master!—Prince of Earth and Air!—

Who walks the clouds and waters—in his hand
The sceptre of the elements, which tear

Themselves to chaos at his high command!

He breatheth—and a tempest shakes the sea;

He speaketh—and the clouds reply in thunder;

He gazeth—from his glance the sunbeams flee;

He moveth—earthquakes rend the world asunder.
Beneath his footsteps the volcanos rise;

His shadow is the Pestilence; his path

The comets herald through the crackling skies;

And planets turn to ashes at his wrath.

To him War offers daily sacrifice;

To him Death pays his tribute; Life is his,

With all its infinite of agonies—

And his the spirit of whatever is!

(*Enter the DESTINIES and NEMESIS.*)

FIRST DESTINY.

Glory to Arimanes! on the earth

His power increaseth—both my sisters did

His bidding, nor did I neglect my duty!

SECOND DESTINY.

Glory to Arimanes! we who bow

The necks of men, bow down before his throne!

THIRD DESTINY.

Glory to Arimanes!—we await
His nod!

NEMESIS.

Sovereign of Sovereigns! we are thine,
And all that liveth, more or less, is ours,
And most things wholly so; still to increase
Our power, increasing thine, demands our care,
And we are vigilant—Thy late commands
Have been fulfilled to the utmost.

(Enter MANFRED.)

A SPIRIT.

What is here?
A mortal!—Thou most rash and fatal wretch,
Bow down and worship!

SECOND SPIRIT.

I do know the man—
A magian of great power, and fearful skill!

THIRD SPIRIT.

Bow down and worship, slave!—What, know'st thou not
'Thine and our Sovereign?—Tremble, and obey!

ALL THE SPIRITS.

Prostrate thyself, and thy condemned clay,
Child of the Earth! or dread the worst.

MANFRED.

I know it;
And yet ye see I kneel not.

FOURTH SPIRIT.

'Twill be taught thee.

MANFRED.

'Tis taught already ;—many a night on the earth,
On the bare ground, have I bow'd down my face,
And strew'd my head with ashes ; I have known
The fulness of humiliation, for
I sunk before my vain despair, and knelt
To my own desolation.

FIFTH SPIRIT.

Dost thou dare
Refuse to Arimanes on his throne
What the whole earth accords, beholding not
The terror of his glory ?—Crouch ! I say.

MANFRED.

Bid *him* bow down to that which is above him,
The overruling Infinite—the Maker
Who made him not for worship—let him kneel,
And we will kneel together.

THE SPIRITS.

Crush the worm !

Tear him in pieces !—

FIRST DESTINY.

Hence ! Avaunt !—he's mine,
Prince of the Powers invisible ! This man
Is of no common order, as his port
And presence here denote ; his sufferings
Have been of an immortal nature, like
Our own ; his knowledge, and his powers and will,
As far as is compatible with clay,
Which clogs the ethereal essence, have been such

So

MANFRED.

As clay hath seldom borne ; his aspirations
Have been beyond the dwellers of the earth,
And they have only taught him what we know—
That knowledge is not happiness, and science
But an exchange of ignorance for that
Which is another kind of ignorance.
This is not all—the passions, attributes
Of earth and heaven, from which no power, nor being,
Nor breath from the worm upwards is exempt,
Have pierced his heart ; and in their consequence
Made him a thing, which I, who pity not,
Yet pardon those who pity. He is mine,
And thine, it may be—be it so, or not,
No other Spirit in this region hath
A soul like his—or power upon his soul.

NEMESIS.

What doth he here then ?

FIRST DESTINY.

Let him answer that.

MANFRED.

Ye know what I have known ; and without power
I could not be amongst ye : but there are
Powers deeper still beyond—I come in quest
Of such, to answer unto what I seek.

NEMESIS.

What would'st thou?

MANFRED.

Thou canst not reply to me.
Call up the dead—my question is for them.

NEMESIS.

Great Arimanes, doth thy will avouch
The wishes of this mortal?

ARIMANES.

Yea.

NEMESIS.

Whom would'st thou
Uncharnel?

MANFRED.

One without a tomb—call up
Astarte.

NEMESIS.

Shadow! or Spirit!

Whatever thou art,
Which still doth inherit

The whole or a part
Of the form of thy birth,

Of the mould of thy clay,
Which returned to the earth,

Re-appear to the day!

Bear what thou borest,

The heart and the form,

And the aspect thou worest

Redeem from the worm.

Appear!—Appear!—Appear!

Who sent thee there requires thee here!

(*The phantom of ASTARTE rises and
stands in the midst.*)

MANFRED.

Can this be Death? there's bloom upon her cheek;

But now I see it is no living hue,
 But a strange hectic—like the unnatural red
 Which Autumn plants upon the perish'd leaf.
 It is the same! Oh! God! that I should dread
 To look upon the same—Astarte!—No,
 I cannot speak to her—but bid her speak—
 Forgive me or condemn me.

NEMESIS.

By the power which hath broken
 The grave which enthrall'd thee,
 Speak to him who hath spoken,
 Or those who have call'd thee!

MANFRED.

She is silent,
 And in that silence I am more than answered.

NEMESIS.

My power extends no further. Prince of air!
 It rests with thee alone—command her voice.

ARIMANES.

Spirit—obey this sceptre!

NEMESIS.

Silent still!

She is not of our order, but belongs
 To the other powers. Mortal! thy quest is vain,
 And we are baffled also.

MANFRED.

Hear me, hear me—
 Astarte! my beloved! speak to me:

I have so much endured—so much endure—
Look on me! the grave hath not changed thee more
Than I am changed for thee. 'Thou lovedst me
Too much, as I loved thee: we were not made
To torture thus each other, though it were
The deadliest sin to love as we have loved.
Say that thou loath'st me not—that I do bear
This punishment for both—that thou wilt be
One of the blessed—and that I shall die;
For hitherto all hateful things conspire
To bind me in existence—in a life
Which makes me shrink from immortality—
A future like the past. I cannot rest.
I know not what I ask, nor what I seek:
I feel but what thou art—and what I am;
And I would hear yet once before I perish
The voice which was my music—Speak to me!
For I have call'd on thee in the still night,
Startled the slumbering birds from the hush'd boughs,
And woke the mountain wolves, and made the caves
Acquainted with thy vainly echoed name,
Which answered me—many things answered me—
Spirits and men—but thou wert silent all.
Yet speak to me! I have outwatch'd the stars,
And gazed o'er heaven in vain in search of thee.
Speak to me! I have wandered o'er the earth,
And never found thy likeness—Speak to me!
Look on the fiends around—they feel for me:
I fear them not, and feel for thee alone—
Speak to me! though it be in wrath;—but say—
I reckon not what—but let me hear thee once—
This once—once more!

MANFRED.

PHANTOM OF ASTARTE.

Manfred!

MANFRED.

Say on, say on—
I live but in the sound—it is thy voice!

PHANTOM OF ASTARTE.

Manfred! To-morrow ends thine earthly ills.
Farewell!

MANFRED.

Yet one word more—am I forgiven?

PHANTOM OF ASTARTE.

Farewell!

MANFRED.

Say, shall we meet again?

PHANTOM OF ASTARTE.

Farewell!

MANFRED.

One word for mercy! Say, thou lovest me.

PHANTOM OF ASTARTE.

Manfred!

(The Spirit of ASTARTE disappears.)

NEMESIS.

She's gone, and will not be recall'd;
Her words will be fulfill'd. Return to the earth.

A SPIRIT.

He is convulsed—This is to be a mortal,
And seek the things beyond mortality.

ANOTHER SPIRIT.

Yet, see, he mastereth himself, and makes
His torture tributary to his will.
Had he been one of us, he would have made
An awful spirit.

NEMESIS.

Hast thou further question
Of our great sovereign, or his worshippers?

MANFRED.

None.

NEMESIS.

Then for a time farewell.

MANFRED.

We meet then! Where? On the earth?—
Even as thou wilt: and for the grace accorded
I now depart a debtor. Fare ye well!

(*Exit* MANFRED.)

(*Scene closes.*)

END OF ACT SECOND.

MANFRED.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

A Hall in the Castle of Manfred.

MANFRED and HERMAN.

MANFRED.

What is the hour?

HERMAN.

It wants but one till sunset,
And promises a lovely twilight.

MANFRED.

Say,
Are all things so disposed of in the tower
As I directed?

HERMAN.

All, my lord, are ready ;
Here is the key and casket.

MANFRED.

It is well :
Thou may'st retire.

(*Exit HERMAN.*)

MANFRED (*alone.*)

There is a calm upon me—
Inexplicable stillness! which till now
Did not belong to what I knew of life.
If that I did not know philosophy
To be of all our vanities the motliest,
The merest word that ever fool'd the ear
From out the schoolman's jargon, I should deem
The golden secret, the sought « Kalon, » found,
And seated in my soul. It will not last,
But it is well to have known it, though but once :
It hath enlarged my thoughts with a new sense,
And I within my tablets would note down
That there is such a feeling. Who is there?

(Re-enter HERMAN.)

HERMAN.

My lord, the Abbot of Saint Maurice craves
To greet your presence.

(Enter the ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.)

ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.

Peace be with Count Manfred!

MANFRED.

Thanks, holy father! welcome to these walls ;
Thy presence honours them, and blesseth those
Who dwell within them.

ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.

Would it were so, Count!—
But I would fain confer with thee alone.

MANFRED.

Herman, retire. What would my reverend guest?

ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.

Thus, without prelude :—Age and zeal, my office,
And good intent, must plead my privilege ;
Our near though not acquainted neighbourhood,
May also be my herald. Rumours strange,
And of unholy nature, are abroad,
And busy with thy name, a noble name
For centuries ; may he who bears it now
Transmit it unimpair'd !

MANFRED.

Proceed,—I listen.

ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.

'Tis said thou holdest converse with the things
Which are forbidden to the search of man ;
That with the dwellers of the dark abodes,
The many evil and unheavenly spirits
Which walk the valley of the shade of Death,
Thou communest. I know that with mankind,
Thy fellows in creation, thou dost rarely
Exchange thy thoughts, and that thy solitude
Is as an anchorite's, were it but holy.

MANFRED.

And what are they who do avouch these things ?

ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.

My pious brethren—the scared peasantry—
Even thy own vassals—who do look on thee
With most unquiet eyes. Thy life's in peril.

MANFRED.

Take it.

ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.

I come to save, and not destroy—
I would not pry into thy secret soul;
But if these things be sooth, there still is time
For penitence and pity : reconcile thee
With the true church, and through the church to heaven.

MANFRED.

I hear thee. This is my reply ; whate'er
I may have been, or am, doth rest between
Heaven and myself.—I shall not choose a mortal
To be my mediator. Have I sinn'd
Against your ordinances, prove and punish!

ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.

My son ! I did not speak of punishment,
But penitence and pardon ;—with thyself
The choice of such remains—and for the last,
Our institutions and our strong belief
Have given me power to smoothe the path from sin
To higher hope and better thoughts ; the first
I leave to heaven—“ Vengeance is mine alone ! ”
So saith the Lord, and with all humbleness
His servant echoes back the awful word.

MANFRED.

Old man ! there is no power in holy men,
Nor charm in prayer—nor purifying form
Of penitence—nor outward look—nor fast,
Nor agony—nor, greater than all these,
The innate tortures of that deep despair,
Which is remorse without the fear of hell,
But all in all sufficient to itself

Would make a hell of heaven—can exorcise
 From out the unbounded spirit, the quick sense
 Of its own sins, wrongs, sufferance, and revenge
 Upon itself; there is no future pang
 Can deal that justice on the self-condemn'd
 He deals on his own soul.

ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.

All this is well;
 For this will pass away, and be succeeded
 By an auspicious hope, which shall look up
 With calm assurance to that blessed place,
 Which all who seek may win, whatever be
 Their earthly errors, so they be atoned :
 And the commencement of atonement is
 The sense of its necessity.—Say on—
 And all our church can teach thee shall be taught ;
 And all we can absolve thee, shall be pardon'd.

MANFRED.

When Rome's sixth Emperor was near his last,
 The victim of a self-inflicted wound,
 To shun the torments of a public death
 From senates once his slaves, a certain soldier,
 With show of loyal pity, would have staunch'd
 The gushing throat with his officious robe ;
 The dying Roman thrust him back and said—
 Some empire still in his expiring glance,
 " It is too late—is this fidelity? "

ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.

And what of this?

MANFRED.

I answer with the Roman—

" It is too late! "

ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.

It never can be so,
To reconcile thyself with thy own soul,
And thy own soul with heaven. Hast thou no hope?
'Tis strange—even those who do despair above,
Yet shape themselves some phantasy on earth,
To which frail twig they cling, like drowning men.

MANFRED.

Ay—father! I have had those earthly visions
And noble aspirations in my youth,
To make my own the mind of other men,
The enlightener of nations; and to rise
I knew not whither—it might be to fall;
But fall, even as the mountain-cataract,
Which having leapt from its more dazzling height,
Even in the foaming strength of its abyss,
(Which casts up misty columns that become
Clouds raining from the re-ascended skies,)
Lies low but mighty still.—But this is past,
My thoughts mistook themselves.

ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.

And wherefore so?

MANFRED.

I could not tame my nature down; for he
Must serve who fain would sway—and sooth—and sue—
And watch all time—and pry into all place—
And be a living lie—who would become
A mighty thing amongst the mean, and such
The mass are: I disdained to mingle with
A herd, though to be leader—and of wolves.
The lion is alone, and so am I.

ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.

And why not live and act with other men?

MANFRED.

Because my nature was averse from life;
And yet not cruel; for I would not make,
But find a desolation:—like the wind,
The red-hot breath of the most lone Simoom,
Which dwells but in the desert, and sweeps o'er
The barren sands which bear no shrubs to blast,
And revels o'er their wild and arid waves,
And seeketh not, so that it is not sought,
But being met is deadly; such hath been
The course of my existence; but there came
Things in my path which are no more.

ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.

Alas!

I 'gin to fear that thou art past all aid
From me and from my calling; yet so young,
I still would——

MANFRED.

Look on me! there is an order
Of mortals on the earth, who do become
Old in their youth, and die ere middle age,
Without the violence of warlike death;
Some perishing of pleasure—some of study—
Some worn with toil—some of mere weariness—
Some of disease—and some insanity—
And some of withered or of broken hearts;
For this last is a malady which slays
More than are numbered in the lists of Fate,

Taking all shapes, and bearing many names.
Look upon me! for even of all these things
Have I partaken; and of all these things,
One were enough; then wonder not that I
Am what I am, but that I ever was,
Or having been, that I am still on earth.

ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.

Yet, hear me still——

MANFRED.

Old man! I do respect
Thine order, and revere thine years; I deem
Thy purpose pious, but it is in vain:
Think me not churlish; I would spare thyself,
Far more than me, in shunning at this time
All further colloquy—and so—farewell.

(*Exit* MANFRED.)

ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.

This should have been a noble creature: he
Hath all the energy which would have made
A goodly frame of glorious elements,
Had they been wisely mingled; as it is,
It is an awful chaos—light and darkness—
And mind and dust—and passions and pure thoughts,
Mix'd, and contending without end or order,
All dormant or destructive: he will perish,
And yet he must not; I will try once more,
For such are worth redemption; and my duty
Is to dare all things for a righteous end.
I'll follow him—but cautiously, though surely.

(*Exit* ABBOT.)

SCENE II.

Another chamber.

MANFRED and HERMAN.

HERMAN.

My lord, you bade me wait on you at sunset :
He sinks behind the mountain.

MANFRED.

Doth he so?

I will look on him.

(MANFRED advances to the window of the Hall.)

Glorious orb! the idol
Of early nature, and the vigorous race
Of undiseased mankind, the giant sons⁴
Of the embrace of angels with a sex
More beautiful than they, which did draw down
The erring spirits who can ne'er return.—
Most glorious orb! that wert a worship ere
The mystery of thy making was reveal'd!
Thou earliest minister of the Almighty,
Which gladden'd, on their mountain tops, the hearts
Of the Chaldean shepherds, till they pour'd
Themselves in orisons! Thou material God!
And representative of the Unknown—
Who chose thee for his shadow! Thou chief star!
Centre of many stars! which mak'st our earth
Endurable, and temperest the hues
And hearts of all who walk within thy rays!
Sire of the seasons! Monarch of the climes,
And those who dwell in them! for near or far,
Our inborn spirits have a tint of thee,

Even as our outward aspects ;—thou dost rise,
And shine, and set in glory. Fare thee well!
I ne'er shall see thee more. As my first glance
Of love and wonder was for thee, then take
My latest look : thou wilt not beam on one
To whom the gifts of life and warmth have been
Of a more fatal nature. He is gone :
I follow.

(*Exit* MANFRED.)

SCENE III.

The Mountains—The Castle of Manfred at some distance.—A terrace before a Tower.—Time, Twilight.

HERMAN, MANUEL, and other dependants of MANFRED.

HERMAN.

'Tis strange enough ; night after night, for years,
He hath pursued long vigils in this tower,
Without a witness. I have been within it,—
So have we all been oft-times ; but from it,
Or its contents, it were impossible
To draw conclusions absolute of aught
His studies tend to. To be sure, there is
One chamber where none enter ; I would give
The fee of what I have to come these three years,
To pore upon its mysteries.

MANUEL.

'Twere dangerous ;
Content thyself with what thou knowest already.

HERMAN.

Ah ! Manuel ! thou art elderly and wise,
And could'st say much ; thou hast dwelt within the castle—
How many years is't ?

MANFRED.

MANUEL.

Ere Count Manfred's birth,
I served his father, whom he nought resembles.

HERMAN.

There be more sons in like predicament.
But wherein do they differ?

MANUEL.

I speak not
Of features or of form, but mind and habits :
Count Sigismund was proud,—but gay and free,—
A warrior and a reveller ; he dwelt not
With books and solitude, nor made the night
A gloomy vigil, but a festal time,
Merrier than day ; he did not walk the rocks
And forests, like a wolf, nor turn aside
From men and their delights.

HERMAN.

Beshrew the hour,
But those were jocund times ! I would that such
Would visit the old walls again ; they look
As if they had forgotten them.

MANUEL.

These walls
Must change their chieftain first. Oh ! I have seen
Some strange things in them, Herman.

HERMAN.

Come, be friendly ;
Relate me some to while away our watch :
I've heard thee darkly speak of an event
Which happened hereabouts, by this same tower.

MANUEL.

That was a night indeed; I do remember
 'Twas twilight, as it may be now, and such
 Another evening;—yon red cloud, which rests
 On Eigher's pinnacle, so rested then,—
 So like that it might be the same; the wind
 Was faint and gusty, and the mountain snows
 Began to glitter with the climbing moon;
 Count Manfred was, as now, within his tower,—
 How occupied, we knew not, but with him
 The sole companion of his wanderings
 And watchings—her, whom of all earthly things
 That lived, the only thing he seem'd to love,
 As he, indeed, by blood was bound to do,
 The lady Astarte, his,—Hush! who comes here?

(*Enter the ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.*)

ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.

Where is your master?

HERMAN.

Yonder, in the tower.

ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.

I must speak with him.

MANUEL.

'Tis impossible;
 He is most private, and must not be thus
 Intruded on.

ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.

Upon myself I take
 The forfeit of my fault, if fault there be—
 But I must see him.

MANFRED.

HERMAN.

Thou hast seen him once
This eve already.

ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.

Herman! I command thee,
Knock, and apprize the Count of my approach.

HERMAN.

We dare not.

ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.

Then it seems I must be herald
Of my own purpose.

MANUEL.

Reverend father, stop—
I pray you, pause.

ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.

Why so?

MANUEL.

But step this way,
And I will tell you further.

(Exeunt.)

SCENE IV.

*(Interior of the Tower.)*MANFRED *alone.*

The stars are forth, the moon above the tops
Of the snow-shining mountains.—Beautiful!
I linger yet with Nature, for the night

Hath been to me a more familiar face
Than that of man; and in her starry shade
Of dim and solitary loveliness
I learn'd the language of another world.
I do remember me, that in my youth,
When I was wandering,—upon such a night
I stood within the Coliseum's wall,
Midst the chief relics of almighty Rome;
The trees which grew along the broken arches
Waved dark in the blue midnight, and the stars
Shone through the rents of ruin; from afar
The watchdog bayed beyond the Tiber; and
More near from out the Cæsar's palace came
The owl's long cry, and, interruptedly,
Of distant sentinels the fitful song
Begun and died upon the gentle wind.
Some cypresses beyond the time-worn breach
Appeared to skirt the horizon, yet they stood
Within a bowshot—where the Cæsars dwelt,
And dwell the tuneless birds of night, amidst
A grove which springs through levell'd battlements,
And twines its roots with the imperial hearths.
Ivy usurps the laurel's place of growth;—
But the gladiator's bloody Circus stands,
A noble wreck in ruinous perfection!
While Cæsar's chambers, and the Augustan halls,
Grovel on earth in indistinct decay.—
And thou didst shine, thou rolling moon, upon
All this, and cast a wide and tender light,
Which soften'd down the hoar austerity
Of rugged desolation, and fill'd up,
As 'twere, anew, the gaps of centuries;
Leaving that beautiful which still was so,
And making that which was not, till the place

Became religion, and the heart ran o'er
 With silent worship of the great of old!—
 The dead, but sceptred sovereigns, who still rule
 Our spirits from their urns.—'Twas such a night!
 'Tis strange that I recall it at this time;
 But I have found our thoughts take wildest flight
 Even at the moment when they should array
 Themselves in pensive order.

(*Enter the ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.*)

ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.

My good Lord!

I crave a second grace for this approach;
 But yet let not my humble zeal offend
 By its abruptness—all it hath of ill
 Recoils on me; its good in the effect
 May light upon your head—could I say *heart*—
 Could I touch *that*, with words or prayers, I should
 Recall a noble spirit which hath wandered,
 But is not yet all lost.

MANFRED.

Thou know'st me not;
 My days are numbered, and my deeds recorded:
 Retire, or 'twill be dangerous—Away!

ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.

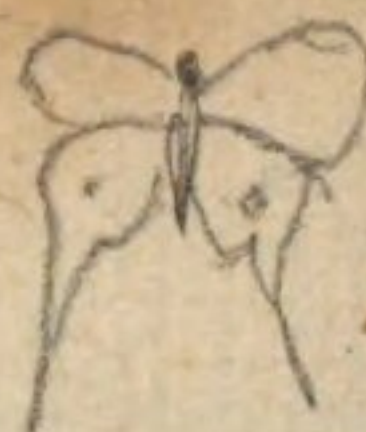
Thou dost not mean to menace me?

MANFRED.

Not I;

I simply tell thee peril is at hand,
 And would preserve thee.





ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.

What dost mean?

MANFRED.

Look there!

What dost thou see?

ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.

Nothing.

MANFRED.

Look there, I say,

And steadfastly; now tell me what thou seest?

ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.

That which should shake me,—but I fear it not—
I see a dusk and awful figure rise
Like an infernal god from out the earth;
His face wrapt in a mantle, and his form
Robed as with angry clouds; he stands between
Thyself and me—but I do fear him not.

MANFRED.

Thou hast no cause—he shall not harm thee—but
His sight may shock thine old limbs into palsy.
I say to thee—Retire!

ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.

And I reply—
Never—till I have battled with this fiend—
What doth he here?

MANFRED.

Why—ay—what doth he here?
I did not send for him,—he is unbidden.



ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.

Alas! lost mortal! what with guests like these
Hast thou to do! I tremble for thy sake;
Why doth he gaze on thee, and thou on him?
Ah! he unveils his aspect; on his brow
The thunder-scars are graven; from his eye
Glares forth the immortality of Hell—
Avaunt!——

MANFRED.

Pronounce—what is thy mission?

SPIRIT.

Come!

ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.

What art thou, unknown being! answer—speak!

SPIRIT.

The genius of this mortal.—Come! 'tis time.

MANFRED.

I am prepared for all things, but deny
The power which summons me. Who sent thee here?

SPIRIT.

Thou'lt know anon—Come! come!

MANFRED.

I have commanded
Things of an essence greater far than thine,
And striven with thy masters. Get thee hence!

SPIRIT.

Mortal! thine hour is come—Away! I say.

MANFRED.

I knew and know my hour is come, but not
To render up my soul to such as thee :
Away! I'll die as I have lived—alone.

SPIRIT.

Then I must summon up my brethren.—Rise!

(Other Spirits rise up.)

ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.

Avaunt! ye evil ones!—Avaunt! I say,—
Ye have no power where piety hath power,
And I do charge ye in the name—

SPIRIT.

Old man!

We know ourselves, our mission, and thine order;
Waste not thy holy words on idle uses,
It were in vain; this man is forfeited.
Once more I summon him—Away! away!

MANFRED.

I do defy ye,—though I feel my soul
Is ebbing from me, yet I do defy ye;
Nor will I hence, while I have earthly breath
To breathe my scorn upon ye—earthly strength
To wrestle, though with spirits; what ye take
Shall be ta'en limb by limb.

SPIRIT.

Reluctant mortal!

Is this the Magian who would so pervade
The world invisible, and make himself

Almost our equal?—Can it be that thou
Art thus in love with life? the very life
Which made thee wretched!

MANFRED.

Thou false fiend, thou liest!
My life is in its last hour,—*that* I know,
Nor would redeem a moment of that hour;
I do not combat against Death, but thee
And thy surrounding angels; my past power
Was purchased by no compact with thy crew,
But by superior science—penance—daring—
And length of watching—strength of mind—and skill
In knowledge of our fathers—when the earth
Saw men and spirits walking side by side,
And gave ye no supremacy; I stand
Upon my strength—I do defy—deny—
Spurn back, and scorn ye!—

SPIRIT.

But thy many crimes
Have made thee—

MANFRED.

What are they to such as thee?
Must crimes be punish'd but by other crimes,
And greater criminals?—Back to thy Hell!
Thou hast no power upon me, *that* I feel;
Thou never shalt possess me, *that* I know:
What I have done is done; I bear within
A torture which could nothing gain from thine:
The mind which is immortal makes itself
Requital for its good or evil thoughts—
Is its own origin of ill and end—
And its own place and time—its innate sense,

When stripp'd of this mortality, derives
 No colour from the fleeting things without;
 But is absorb'd in sufferance or in joy,
 Born from the knowledge of its own desert.
Thou didst not tempt me, and thou could'st not tempt me;
 I have not been thy dupe, nor am thy prey—
 But was my own destroyer, and will be
 My own hereafter.—Back, ye baffled fiends!
 The hand of Death is on me—but not yours!

(The demons disappear.)

ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.

Alas! how pale thou art—thy lips are white—
 And thy breast heaves—and in thy gasping throat
 The accents rattle—Give thy prayers to heaven—
 Pray—albeit but in thought,—but die not thus.

MANFRED.

'Tis over—my dull eyes can fix thee not;
 But all things swim around me, and the earth
 Heaves as it were beneath me. Fare thee well—
 Give me thy hand.

ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.

Cold—cold—even to the heart—
 But yet one prayer—alas! how fares it with thee?—

MANFRED.

Old man! 'tis not so difficult to die.

(MANFRED expires.)

ABBOT OF SAINT MAURICE.

He's gone—his soul hath ta'en its earthless flight—
 Whither? I dread to think—but he is gone.

NOTES

Note 1, page 66, line 4.

—————*the sunbow's rays still arch*
The torrent with the many hues of heaven.

This iris is formed by the rays of the sun over the lower part of the Alpine torrents : it is exactly like a rainbow, come down to pay a visit, and so close that you may walk into it :—this effect lasts till noon.

Note 2, page 69, line 15.

He who from out their fountain dwellings raised
Eros and Anteros, at Gadara.

The philosopher Iamblicus. The story of the raising of Eros and Anteros may be found in his life, by Eunapius. It is well told.

Note 3, page 73, line 19.

—————*she replied*
In words of dubious import, but fulfill'd.

The story of Pausanias, king of Sparta, (who commanded the Greeks at the battle of Platea, and afterwards perished for an attempt to betray the Lacedemonians) and Cleonice, is told in Plutarch's life of Cimon ; and in the Laconics of Pausanias the Sophist, in his description of Greece.

Note 4, page 94, line 13.

—————*the giant sons*
Of the embrace of angels.

« That the *Sons of God* saw the daughters of men, that they were fair, » etc.

« There were giants in the earth in those days ; and also after that, when the *Sons of God* came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. »

Genesis, ch. vj. verses 2 and 4.

ADVERTISEMENT.

« CELUI qui remplissait alors cette place était
« un gentilhomme polonais nommé Mazeppa ,
« né dans le palatinat de Podolie ; il avait été
« élevé page de Jean Casimir, et avait pris à sa
« cour quelque teinture des belles-lettres. Une
« intrigue qu'il eut dans sa jeunesse avec la
« femme d'un gentilhomme polonais ayant été
« découverte , le mari le fit lier tout nu sur un
« cheval farouche , et le laissa aller en cet état.
« Le cheval , qui était du pays de l'Ukraine ,
« y retourna , et y porta Mazeppa demi-mort
« de fatigue et de faim. Quelques paysans le
« secoururent. Il resta long-temps parmi eux ,
« et se signala dans plusieurs courses contre les
« Tartares. La supériorité de ses lumières lui
« donna une grande considération parmi les
« Cosaques. Sa réputation s'augmentant de jour
« en jour obligea le Czar à le faire prince de
« l'Ukraine. » VOLTAIRE, *Hist. de Charles XII*,
p. 273 , tom. 5 , édit. de Desoer.

« Le roi fuyant et poursuivi , eut son cheval
« tué sous lui ; le colonel Gieta , blessé et per-
« dant tout son sang , lui donna le sien. Ainsi ,
« on remit deux fois à cheval , dans sa fuite, ce
« conquérant qui n'avait pu y monter pendant
« la bataille. » *Idem.* p. 283.

« Le roi alla par un autre chemin avec quel-
« ques cavaliers. Le carrosse où il était rompit
« dans la marche ; on le remit à cheval. Pour
« comble de disgrâce , il s'égara pendant la
« nuit dans un bois ; là , son courage ne pou-
« vant plus suppléer à ses forces épuisées , les
« douleurs de sa blessure devenues plus insup-
« portables par la fatigue , son cheval étant
« tombé de lassitude , il se coucha quelques
« heures au pied d'un arbre , en danger d'être
« surpris à tout moment par les vainqueurs ,
« qui le cherchaient de tous côtés. » *Idem.*
p. 284.

MAZEPPA.

I.

'T WAS after dread Pultowa's day,
When fortune left the royal Swede,
Around a slaughter'd army lay,
No more to combat and to bleed.
The power and glory of the war,
Faithless as their vain votaries, men,
Had pass'd to the triumphant Czar,
And Moscow's walls were safe again,
Until a day more dark and drear,
And a more memorable year,
Should give to slaughter and to shame
A mightier host and haughtier name ;
A greater wreck, a deeper fall,
A shock to one—a thunderbolt to all.

II.

Such was the hazard of the die ;
The wounded Charles was taught to fly
By day and night through field and flood,
Stain'd with his own and subjects' blood ;
For thousands fell that flight to aid :
And not a voice was heard t'upbraid
Ambition in his humbled hour,
When truth had nought to dread from power.

His horse was slain, and Gieta gave
His own—and died the Russian's slave.
This too sinks after many a league
Of well sustain'd but vain fatigue ;
And in the depth of forests, darkling
The watch-fires in the distance sparkling—
The beacons of surrounding foes—
A king must lay his limbs at length.
Are these the laurels and repose
For which the nations strain their strength?
They laid him by a savage tree,
In out-worn nature's agony ;
His wounds were stiff—his limbs were stark—
The heavy hour was chill and dark :
The fever in his blood forbade
A transient slumber's fitful aid :
And thus it was ; but yet through all,
Kinglike the monarch bore his fall,
And made, in this extreme of ill,
His pangs the vassals of his will ;
All silent and subdued were they,
As once the nations round him lay.

III.

A band of chiefs !—alas ! how few,
Since but the fleeting of a day
Had thinn'd it ; but this wreck was true
And chivalrous : upon the clay
Each sate him down, all sad and mute,
Beside his monarch and his steed ;
For danger levels man and brute,
And all are fellows in their need.
Among the rest, Mazeppa made
His pillow in an old oak's shade—

Himself as rough, and scarce less old,
The Ukraine's hetman, calm and bold ;
But first, outspent with this long course,
The Cossack prince rubb'd down his horse,
And made for him a leafy bed,
And smooth'd his fetlocks and his mane,
And slack'd his girth, and stripp'd his rein,
And joy'd to see how well he fed ;
For until now he had the dread
His wearied courser might refuse
To browse beneath the midnight dew:
But he was hardy as his lord,
And little cared for bed and board ;
But spirited and docile too ;
Whate'er was to be done, would do.
Shaggy and swift, and strong of limb,
All Tartar-like he carried him ;
Obey'd his voice, and came at call,
And knew him in the midst of all :
Though thousands were around,—and Night,
Without a star, pursued her flight,—
That steed from sunset until dawn
His chief would follow like a fawn.

IV.

This done, Mazeppa spread his cloak,
And laid his lance beneath his oak,
Felt if his arms in order good
The long day's march had well withstood—
If still the powder fill'd the pan,
And flints unloosen'd kept their lock—
His sabre's hilt and scabbard felt,
And whether they had chafed his belt—

And next the venerable man,
From out his haversack and can,
Prepared and spread his slender stock ;
And to the monarch and his men
The whole or portion offer'd then
With far less of inquietude
Than courtiers at a banquet would.
And Charles of this his slender share
With smiles partook a moment there,
To force of cheer a greater show,
And seem above both wounds and woe ;—
And then he said—“ Of all our band,
“ Though firm of heart and strong of hand,
“ In skirmish, march, or forage, none
“ Can less have said or more have done
“ Than thee, Mazeppa ! On the earth
“ So fit a pair had never birth,
“ Since Alexander's days till now,
“ As thy Bucephalus and thou :
“ All Scythia's fame to thine should yield
“ For pricking on o'er flood and field. ”
Mazeppa answer'd—“ Ill betide
“ The school wherein I learn'd to ride ! ”
Quoth Charles—“ Old hetman, wherefore so,
“ Since thou hast learn'd the art so well ? ”
Mazeppa said—“ 'Twere long to tell ;
“ And we have many a league to go
“ With every now and then a blow,
“ And ten to one at least the foe,
“ Before our steeds may graze at ease
“ Beyond the swift Borysthenes :
“ And, Sire, your limbs have need of rest,
“ And I will be the sentinel

« Of this your troop. »—« But I request, »
Said Sweden's monarch, « thou wilt tell
« This tale of thine, and I may reap,
« Perchance, from this the boon of sleep,
« For at this moment from my eyes
« The hope of present slumber flies. »

V.

« Well, Sire, with such a hope, I'll track
« My seventy years of memory back :
« I think 'twas in my twentieth spring,—
« Ay, 'twas,—when Casimir was king—
« John Casimir,—I was his page
« Six summers in my earlier age;
« A learned monarch, faith! was he,
« And most unlike your majesty :
« He made no wars, and did not gain
« New realms to lose them back again;
« And (save debates in Warsaw's diet)
« He reign'd in most unseemly quiet;
« Not that he had no cares to vex,
« He loved the Muses and the sex;
« And sometimes these so froward are,
« They made him wish himself at war;
« But soon his wrath being o'er, he took
« Another mistress, or new book :
« And then he gave prodigious fêtes—
« All Warsaw gather'd round his gates
« To gaze upon his splendid court,
« And dames, and chiefs of princely port :
« He was the Polish Solomon,
« So sung his poets, all but one,
« Who, being unpension'd, made a satire,
« And boasted that he could not flatter.

“ It was a court of jousts and mimes,
“ Where every courtier tried at rhymes ;
“ Even I for once produced some verses,
“ And sign’d my odes, Despairing Thirsis.

VI.

“ There was a certain Palatine,
“ A count of far and high descent,
“ Rich as a salt or silver mine (1) ;
“ And he was proud, ye may divine,
“ As if from heaven he had been sent :
“ He had such wealth in blood and ore
“ As few could match beneath the throne ;
“ And he would gaze upon his store,
“ And o’er his pedigree would pore,
“ Until by some confusion led,
“ Which almost look’d like want of head,
“ He thought their merits were his own.
“ His wife was not of his opinion—
“ His junior she by thirty years—
“ Grew daily tired of his dominion ;
“ And , after wishes, hopes, and fears,
“ To virtue a few farewell tears,
“ A restless dream or two, some glances
“ At Warsaw’s youth, some songs, and dances,
“ Awaited but the usual chances,
“ Those happy accidents which render
“ The coldest dames so very tender,
“ To deck her Count with titles given,
“ ’Tis said, as passports into heaven ;
“ But, strange to say, they rarely boast
“ Of these who have deserved them most.

(1) This comparison of a « salt mine » may perhaps be permitted to a Pole, as the wealth of the country consists greatly in the salt mines.

VII.

“ I was a goodly stripling then ;
“ At seventy years I so may say ,
“ That there were few, or boys or men,
“ Who, in my dawning time of day,
“ Of vassal or of knight’s degree,
“ Could vie in vanities with me ;
“ For I had strength, youth, gaiety,
“ A port, not like to this ye see,
“ But smooth, as all is rugged now ;
“ For time, and care, and war, have plough’d
“ My very soul from out my brow ;
“ And thus I should be disavow’d
“ By all my kind and kin, could they
“ Compare my day and yesterday ;
“ This change was wrought, too, long ere age
“ Had ta’en my features for his page :
“ With years, ye know, have not declined
“ My strength, my courage, or my mind,
“ Or at this hour I should not be
“ Telling old tales beneath a tree,
“ With starless skies my canopy.
“ But let me on : Theresa’s form—
“ Methinks it glides before me now,
“ Between me and yon chestnut’s bough,
“ The memory is so quick and warm ;
“ And yet I find no words to tell
“ The shape of her I loved so well :
“ She had the Asiatic eye,
“ Such as our Turkish neighbourhood
“ Hath mingled with our Polish blood,
“ Dark as above us is the sky ;

“ But through it stole a tender light,
“ Like the first moonrise at midnight;
“ Large, dark, and swimming in the stream,
“ Which seem’d to melt to its own beam;
“ All love, half languor, and half fire,
“ Like saints that at the stake expire,
“ And lift their raptured looks on high,
“ As though it were a joy to die.
“ A brow like a midsummer lake,
“ Transparent with the sun therein,
“ When waves no murmur dare to make,
“ And heaven beholds her face within.
“ A cheek and lip—but why proceed?
“ I loved her then—I love her still;
“ And such as I am, love indeed
“ In fierce extremes—in good and ill.
“ But still we love even in our rage,
“ And haunted to our very age
“ With the vain shadow of the past,
“ As is Mazeppa to the last.

VIII.

“ We met—we gazed—I saw, and sigh’d,
“ She did not speak, and yet replied;
“ There are ten thousand tones and signs
“ We hear and see, but none defines—
“ Involuntary sparks of thought,
“ Which strike from out the heart o’erwrought,
“ And form a strange intelligence,
“ Alike mysterious and intense,
“ Which link the burning chain that binds,
“ Without their will, young hearts and minds;
“ Conveying, as the electric wire,
“ We know not how, the absorbing fire.—

“ I saw, and sigh’d—in silence wept,
“ And still reluctant distance kept,
“ Until I was made known to her,
“ And we might then and there confer
“ Without suspicion—then, even then,
“ I long’d, and was resolved to speak;
“ But on my lips they died again,
“ The accents tremulous and weak,
“ Until one hour.—There is a game,
“ A frivolous and foolish play,
“ Wherewith we while away the day;
“ It is—I have forgot the name—
“ And we to this, it seems, were set,
“ By some strange chance, which I forget :
“ I reck’d not if I won or lost,
“ It was enough for me to be
“ So near to hear, and oh! to see
“ The being whom I loved the most.—
“ I watch’d her as a sentinel,
“ (May ours this dark night watch as well!)
“ Until I saw, and thus it was,
“ That she was pensive, nor perceived
“ Her occupation, nor was grieved
“ Nor glad to lose or gain; but still
“ Play’d on for hours, as if her will
“ Yet bound her to the place, though not
“ That hers might be the winning lot.
“ Then through my brain the thought did pass
“ Even as a flash of lightning there,
“ That there was something in her air
“ Which would not doom me to despair;
“ And on the thought my words broke forth,
“ All incoherent as they were—
“ Their eloquence was little worth,

« But yet she listen'd—'tis enough—
« Who listens once will listen twice ;
« Her heart, be sure, is not of ice,
« And one refusal no rebuff.

IX.

« I loved, and was beloved again—
« They tell me, Sire, you never knew
« Those gentle frailties ; if 'tis true,
« I shorten all my joy or pain,
« To you 'twould seem absurd as vain ;
« But all men are not born to reign,
« Or o'er their passions, or, as you,
« Thus o'er themselves and nations too.
« I am—or rather *was*—a prince,
« A chief of thousands, and could lead
« Them on where each would foremost bleed ;
« But could not o'er myself evince
« The like control—But to resume :
« I loved, and was beloved again ;
« In sooth, it is a happy doom,
« But yet where happiest ends in pain.—
« We met in secret, and the hour
« Which led me to that lady's bower
« Was fiery expectation's dower.
« My days and nights were nothing—all
« Except that hour, which doth recall
« In the long lapse from youth to age
« No other like itself—I'd give
« The Ukraine back again to live
« It o'er once more—and be a page,
« The happy page, who was the lord
« Of one soft heart, and his own sword,

« And had no other gem nor wealt'
 « Save nature's gift of youth and health,—
 « We met in secret—doubly sweet,
 « Some say, they find it so to meet;
 « I know not that—I would have given
 « My life but to have call'd her mine
 « In the full view of earth and heaven;
 « For I did oft and long repine
 « That we could only meet by stealth.

X.

« For lovers there are many eyes,
 « And such there were on us;—the devil
 « On such occasions should be civil—
 « The devil!—I'm loth to do him wrong,
 « It might be some untoward saint,
 « Who would not be at rest too long,
 « But to his pious bile gave vent—
 « But one fair night, some lurking spies
 « Surprised and seized us both.
 « The Count was something more than wroth—
 « I was unarm'd; but if in steel,
 « All cap-a-pie from head to heel,
 « What 'gainst their numbers could I do?—
 « 'Twas near his castle, far away
 « From city or from succour near,
 « And almost on the break of day;
 « I did not think to see another,
 « My moments seem'd reduced to few;
 « And with one prayer to Mary Mother,
 « And, it may be, a saint or two,
 « As I resign'd me to my fate,
 « They led me to the castle gate :
 « Theresa's doom I never knew,

« Our lot was henceforth separate.—
« An angry man, ye may opine,
« Was he, the proud Count Palatine;
« And he had reason good to be,
« But he was most enraged lest such
« An accident should chance to touch
« Upon his future pedigree;
« Nor less amazed, that such a blot
« His noble 'scutcheon should have got,
« While he was highest of his line;
« Because unto himself he seem'd
« The first of men, nor less he deem'd
« In others' eyes, and most in mine.
« 'Sdeath! with a *page*—perchance a king
« Had reconciled him to the thing;
« But with a stripling of a page—
« I felt—but cannot paint his rage.

XI.

« 'Bring forth the horse!'—the horse was brought;
« In truth, he was a noble steed,
« A Tartar of the Ukraine breed,
« Who look'd as though the speed of thought
« Were in his limbs; but he was wild,
« Wild as the wild deer, and untaught,
« With spur and bridle undefiled—
« 'Twas but a day he had been caught;
« And snorting, with erected mane,
« And struggling fiercely, but in vain,
« In the full foam of wrath and dread
« To me the desert-born was led:
« They bound me on, that menial throng,
« Upon his back with many a thong;

“ Then loosed him with a sudden lash—
“ Away!—away!—and on we dash!—
“ Torrents less rapid and less rash.

XII.

“ Away!—away!—My breath was gone—
“ I saw not where he hurried on :
“ 'Twas scarcely yet the break of day,
“ And on he foam'd—away!—away!—
“ The last of human sounds which rose,
“ As I was darted from my foes,
“ Was the wild shout of savage laughter,
“ Which on the wind came roaring after
“ A moment from that rabble rout :
“ With sudden wrath I wrench'd my head,
“ And snapp'd the cord, which to the mane
“ Had bound my neck in lieu of rein,
“ And writhing half my form about,
“ Howl'd back my curse ; but midst the tread,
“ The thunder of my courser's speed,
“ Perchance they did not hear nor heed ;
“ It vexes me—for I would fain
“ Have paid their insult back again.
“ I paid it well in after days :
“ There is not of that castle gate,
“ Its drawbridge and portcullis' weight,
“ Stone, bar, moat, bridge, or barrier left ;
“ Nor of its fields a blade of grass,
“ Save what grows on a ridge of wall,
“ Where stood the hearth-stone of the hall ;
“ And many a time ye there might pass,
“ Nor dream that e'er that fortress was :
“ I saw its turrets in a blaze,
“ Their crackling battlements all cleft,

« And the hot lead pour down like rain
« From off the scorch'd and blackening roof,
« Whose thickness was not vengeance-proof.
« They little thought that day of pain,
« When lanch'd, as on the lightning's flash,
« They bade me to destruction dash,
« That one day I should come again,
« With twice five thousand horse, to thank
« The Count for his uncourteous ride.
« They play'd me then a bitter prank,
« When, with the wild horse for my guide,
« They bound me to his foaming flank :
« At length I play'd them one as frank—
« For time at last sets all things even—
« And if we do but watch the hour,
« There never yet was human power
« Which could evade, if unforgiven,
« The patient search and vigil long
« Of him who treasures up a wrong.

XIII.

« Away, away, my steed and I,
« Upon the pinions of the wind,
« All human dwellings left behind;
« We sped like meteors through the sky,
« When with its crackling sound the night
« Is chequer'd with the northern light :
« Town—village—none were on our track,
« But a wild plain of far extent,
« And bounded by a forest black ;
« And, save the scarce seen battlement
« On distant heights of some strong hold,
« Against the Tartars built of old,
« No trace of man. The year before

« A Turkish army had march'd o'er;
« And where the Spahi's hoof hath trod,
« The verdure flies the bloody sod:—
« The sky was dull, and dim, and gray,
« And a low breeze crept moaning by—
« I could have answer'd with a sigh—
« But fast we fled, away, away—
« And I could neither sigh nor pray;
« And my cold sweat-drops fell like rain
« Upon the courser's bristling mane;
« But, snorting still with rage and fear,
« He flew upon his far career:
« At times I almost thought, indeed,
« He must have slacken'd in his speed;
« But no—my bound and slender frame
« Was nothing to his angry might,
« And merely like a spur became:
« Each motion which I made to free
« My swoln limbs from their agony,
« Increased his fury and affright:
« I tried my voice,—'twas faint and low,
« But yet he swerved as from a blow;
« And, starting to each accent, sprang
« As from a sudden trumpet's clang:
« Meantime my cords were wet with gore,
« Which, oozing through my limbs, ran o'er;
« And in my tongue the thirst became
« A something firier far than flame.

XIV.

« We near'd the wild wood—'twas so wide,
« I saw no bounds on either side;
« 'Twas studded with old sturdy trees,
« That bent not to the roughest breeze

“ Which howls down from Siberia’s waste,
“ And strips the forest in its haste,—
“ But these were few, and far between
“ Set thick with shrubs more young and green,
“ Luxuriant with their annual leaves,
“ Ere strown by those autumnal eves
“ That nip the forest’s foliage dead,
“ Discolour’d with a lifeless red,
“ Which stands thereon like stiffen’d gore
“ Upon the slain when battle’s o’er,
“ And some long winter’s night hath shed
“ Its frost o’er every tombless head,
“ So cold and stark, the raven’s beak
“ May peck unpierced each frozen cheek:
“ ’Twas a wild waste of underwood,
“ And here and there a chestnut stood,
“ The strong oak, and the hardy pine;
“ But far apart—and well it were,
“ Or else a different lot were mine—
“ The boughs gave way, and did not tear
“ My limbs; and I found strength to bear
“ My wounds, already scarr’d with cold—
“ My bonds forbade to loose my hold.
“ We rustled through the leaves like wind,
“ Left shrubs, and trees, and wolves behind;
“ By night I heard them on the track,
“ Their troop came hard upon our back,
“ With their long gallop, which can tire
“ The hound’s deep hate, and hunter’s fire:
“ Where’er we flew they follow’d on,
“ Nor left us with the morning sun;
“ Behind I saw them scarce a rood,
“ At day-break winding through the wood,

“ And through the night had heard their feet
“ Their stealing, rustling step repeat.
“ Oh ! how I wish’d for spear or sword,
“ At least to die amidst the horde,
“ And perish—if it must be so—
“ At bay, destroying many a foe.
“ When first my courser’s race begun,
“ I wish’d the goal already won ;
“ But now I doubted strength and speed.
“ Vain doubt ! his swift and savage breed
“ Had nerved him like the mountain-roe ;
“ Nor faster falls the blinding snow
“ Which whelms the peasant near the door
“ Whose threshold he shall cross no more,
“ Bewilder’d with the dazzling blast,
“ Than through the forest-paths he past—
“ Untired, untamed, and worse than wild ;
“ All furious as a favour’d child
“ Balk’d of its wish ; or, fiercer still—
“ A woman piqued—who has her will.

XV.

“ The wood was past ; ’twas more than noon,
“ But chill the air although in June ;
“ Or it might be my veins ran cold—
“ Prolong’d endurance tames the bold ;
“ And I was then not what I seem,
“ But headlong as a wintry stream,
“ And wore my feelings out before
“ I well could count their causes o’er :
“ And what with fury, fear, and wrath,
“ The tortures which beset my path,
“ Cold, hunger, sorrow, shame, distress,
“ Thus bound in nature’s nakedness ;

“ Sprung from a race whose rising blood
“ When stirr’d beyond its calmer mood,
“ And trodden hard upon, is like
“ The rattle-snake’s, in act to strike,
“ What marvel if this worn-out trunk
“ Beneath its woes a moment sunk?
“ The earth gave way, the skies roll’d round,
“ I seem’d to sink upon the ground;
“ But err’d, for I was fastly bound.
“ My heart turn’d sick, my brain grew sore,
“ And throb’d awhile, then beat no more :
“ The skies spun like a mighty wheel;
“ I saw the trees like drunkards reel,
“ And a slight flash sprang o’er my eyes,
“ Which saw no farther : he who dies
“ Can die no more than then I died.
“ O’ertortured by that ghastly ride,
“ I felt the blackness come and go,
“ And strove to wake ; but could not make
“ My senses climb up from below :
“ I felt as on a plank at sea,
“ When all the waves that dash o’er thee,
“ At the same time upheave and whelm,
“ And hurl thee towards a desert realm.
“ My undulating life was as
“ The fancied lights that flitting pass
“ Our shut eyes in deep midnight, when
“ Fever begins upon the brain ;
“ But soon it pass’d with little pain,
“ But a confusion worse than such :
“ I own that I should deem it much,
“ Dying, to feel the same again ;
“ And yet I do suppose we must
“ Feel far more ere we turn to dust :

- “ No matter ; I have bared my brow
“ Full in Death’s face—before—and now.

XVI.

- “ My thoughts came back ; where was I ? Cold,
“ And numb, and giddy : pulse by pulse
“ Life reassumed its lingering hold,
“ And throb by throb ; till grown a pang
“ Which for a moment would convulse,
“ My blood reflow’d though thick and chill ;
“ My ear with uncouth noises rang,
“ My heart began once more to thrill ;
“ My sight return’d, though dim, alas !
“ And thicken’d, as it were, with glass.
“ Methought the dash of waves was nigh ;
“ There was a gleam too of the sky,
“ Studded with stars ;—it is no dream ;
“ The wild horse swims the wilder stream !
“ The bright broad river’s gushing tide
“ Sweeps, winding onward, far and wide,
“ And we are half-way, struggling o’er
“ To yon unknown and silent shore.
“ The waters broke my hollow trance,
“ And with a temporary strength
“ My stiffen’d limbs were rebaptized.
“ My courser’s broad breast proudly braves,
“ And dashes off the ascending waves,
“ And onward we advance !
“ We reach the slippery shore at length,
“ A haven I but little prized,
“ For all behind was dark and drear,
“ And all before was night and fear.
“ How many hours of night or day
“ In those suspended pangs I lay,

- “ I could not tell ; I scarcely knew
“ If this were human breath I drew.

XVII.

- “ With glossy skin, and dripping mane,
“ And reeling limbs, and reeking flank,
“ The wild steed’s sinewy nerves still strain
“ Up the repelling bank.
“ We gain the top : a boundless plain
“ Spreads through the shadow of the night,
“ And onward, onward, onward, seems
“ Like precipices in our dreams,
“ To stretch beyond the sight ;
“ And here and there a speck of white,
“ Or scatter’d spot of dusky green,
“ In masses broke into the light,
“ As rose the moon upon my right.
“ But nought distinctly seen
“ In the dim waste, would indicate
“ The omen of a cottage gate ;
“ No twinkling taper from afar
“ Stood like an hospitable star ;
“ Not even an ignis-fatuus rose
“ To make him merry with my woes :
“ That very cheat had cheer’d me then !
“ Although detected, welcome still,
“ Reminding me, through every ill,
“ Of the abodes of men.

XVIII.

- “ Onward we went—but slack and slow ;
“ His savage force at length o’erspent,
“ The drooping courser, faint and low,
“ All feebly foaming went.

“ A sickly infant had had power
“ To guide him forward in that hour;
“ But useless all to me.
“ His new-born tameness nought avail'd;
“ My limbs were bound; my force had fail'd,
“ Perchance, had they been free.
“ With feeble effort still I tried
“ To rend the bonds so starkly tied—
“ But still it was in vain;
“ My limbs were only wrung the more,
“ And soon the idle strife gave o'er,
“ Which but prolong'd their pain :
“ The dizzy race seem'd almost done,
“ Although no goal was nearly won :
“ Some streaks announced the coming sun—
“ How slow, alas! he came!
“ Methought that mist of dawning gray
“ Would never dapple into day;
“ How heavily it roll'd away—
“ Before the eastern flame
“ Rose crimson, and deposed the stars,
“ And call'd the radiance from their cars,
“ And fill'd the earth, from his deep throne,
“ With lonely lustre, all his own.

XIX.

“ Up rose the sun; the mists were curl'd
“ Back from the solitary world
“ Which lay around—behind—before :
“ What boot'd it to traverse o'er
“ Plain, forest, river? Man nor brute,
“ Nor dint of hoof, nor print of foot,

“ Lay in the wild luxuriant soil ;
“ No sign of travel—none of toil ;
“ The very air was mute ;
“ And not an insect’s shrill small horn,
“ Nor matin bird’s new voice was borne
“ From herb nor thicket. Many a werst,
“ Panting as if his heart would burst,
“ The weary brute still stagger’d on ;
“ And still we were—or seem’d—alone :
“ At length, while reeling on our way,
“ Methought I heard a courser neigh,
“ From out yon tuft of blackening firs.
“ Is it the wind those branches stirs ?
“ No, no ! from out the forest prance
“ A trampling troop ; I see them come !
“ In one vast squadron they advance !
“ I strove to cry—my lips were dumb.
“ The steeds rush on in plunging pride ;
“ But where are they the reins to guide ?
“ A thousand horse—and none to ride !
“ With flowing tail and flying mane,
“ Wide nostrils—never stretch’d by pain,
“ Mouths bloodless to the bit or rein,
“ And feet that iron never shod,
“ And flanks unscarr’d by spur or rod.
“ A thousand horse, the wild, the free,
“ Like waves that follow o’er the sea,
“ Came thickly thundering on,
“ As if our faint approach to meet ;
“ The sight re-nerved my courser’s feet,
“ A moment staggering, feebly fleet,
“ A moment, with a faint low neigh,
“ He answer’d, and then fell ;

“ With gasps and glazing eyes he lay,
“ And reeking limbs immoveable,
“ His first and last career is done!
“ On came the troop—they saw him stoop,
“ They saw me strangely bound along
“ His back with many a bloody thong:
“ They stop—they start—they snuff the air,
“ Gallop a moment here and there,
“ Approach, retire, wheel round and round,
“ Then plunging back with sudden bound,
“ Headed by one black mighty steed,
“ Who seem’d the patriarch of his breed,
“ Without a single speck or hair
“ Of white upon his shaggy hide;
“ They snort—they foam—neigh—swerve aside,
“ And backward to the forest fly,
“ By instinct, from a human eye.—
“ They left me there, to my despair,
“ Link’d to the dead and stiffening wretch,
“ Whose lifeless limbs beneath me stretch,
“ Relieved from that unwonted weight,
“ From whence I could not extricate
“ Nor him nor me—and there we lay,
“ The dying on the dead!
“ I little deem’d another day
“ Would see my houseless, helpless head.
“ And there from morn till twilight bound,
“ I felt the heavy hours toil round,
“ With just enough of life to see
“ My last of suns go down on me,
“ In hopeless certainty of mind,
“ That makes us feel at length resign’d
“ To that which our foreboding years
“ Presents the worst and last of fears

« Inevitable—even a boon,
« Nor more unkind for coming soon ;
« Yet shunn'd and dreaded with such care,
« As if it only were a snare
« That prudence might escape :
« At times both wish'd for and implored,
« At times sought with self-pointed sword,
« Yet still a dark and hideous close
« To even intolerable woes,
« And welcome in no shape.
« And, strange to say, the sons of pleasure,
« They who have revell'd beyond measure
« In beauty, wassail, wine, and treasure,
« Die calm, or calmer oft than he
« Whose heritage was misery :
« For he who hath in turn run through
« All that was beautiful and new,
« Hath nought to hope, and nought to leave ;
« And, save the future, (which is view'd
« Not quite as men are base or good,
« But as their nerves may be endued),
« With nought perhaps to grieve :—
« The wretch still hopes his woes must end,
« And Death, whom he should deem his friend,
« Appears, to his distemper'd eyes,
« Arrived to rob him of his prize,
« The tree of his new Paradise.
« To-morrow would have given him all,
« Repaid his pangs, repair'd his fall ;
« To-morrow would have been the first
« Of days no more deplored or curst,
« But bright, and long, and beckoning years,
« Seen dazzling through the mist of tears,

« Guerdon of many a painful hour ;
« To-morrow would have given him power
« To rule, to shine, to smite, to save—
« And must it dawn upon his grave ?

XX.

« The sun was sinking—still I lay
« Chain'd to the chill and stiffening steed,
« I thought to mingle there our clay ;
« And my dim eyes of death had need,
« No hope arose of being freed :
« I cast my last looks up the sky,
« And there between me and the sun
« I saw the expecting raven fly,
« Who scarce would wait till both should die
« Ere his repast begun ;
« He flew, and perch'd, then flew once more,
« And each time nearer than before ;
« I saw his wing through twilight flit,
« And once so near me he alit
« I could have smote, but lack'd the strength ;
« But the slight motion of my hand,
« And feeble scratching of the sand,
« The exerted throat's faint struggling noise,
« Which scarcely could be call'd a voice,
« Together scared him off at length.—
« I know no more—my latest dream
« Is something of a lovely star
« Which fix'd my dull eyes from afar,
« And went and came with wandering beam,
« And of the cold, dull, swimming, dense
« Sensation of recurring sense,
« And then subsiding back to death,
« And then again a little breath,

- " A little thrill, a short suspense,
- " An icy sickness curdling o'er
- " My heart, and sparks that cross'd my brain—
- " A gasp, a throb, a start of pain,
- " A sigh, and nothing more.

XXI.

- " I woke—Where was I?—Do I see
- " A human face look down on me?
- " And doth a roof above me close?
- " Do these limbs on a couch repose?
- " Is this a chamber where I lie?
- " And is it mortal yon bright eye,
- " That watches me with gentle glance?
- " I closed my own again once more,
- " As doubtful that the former trance
- " Could not as yet be o'er.
- " A slender girl, long-hair'd, and tall,
- " Sate watching by the cottage wall;
- " The sparkle of her eye I caught,
- " Even with my first return of thought;
- " For ever and anon she threw
- " A prying, pitying glance on me
- " With her black eye so wild and free:
- " I gazed, and gazed, until I knew
- " No vision it could be,—
- " But that I lived, and was released
- " From adding to the vulture's feast:
- " And when the Cossack maid beheld
- " My heavy eyes at length unseal'd,
- " She smiled—and I essay'd to speak,
- " But fail'd—and she approach'd, and made
- " With lip and finger signs that said,
- " I must not strive as yet to break

“ The silence, till my strength should be
“ Enough to leave my accents free ;
“ And then her hand on mine she laid,
“ And smooth’d the pillow for my head,
“ And stole along on tiptoe tread,
“ And gently oped the door, and spake
“ In whispers—ne’er was voice so sweet !
“ Even music follow’d her light feet ;—
“ But those she call’d were not awake,
“ And she went forth ; but, ere she pass’d,
“ Another look on me she cast,
“ Another sign she made, to say
“ That I had nought to fear, that all
“ Were near, at my command or call,
“ And she would not delay
“ Her due return :—while she was gone,
“ Methought I felt too much alone.

XXII.

“ She came with mother and with sire—
“ What need of more ?—I will not tire
“ With long recital of the rest,
“ Since I became the Cossacks’ guest :
“ They found me senseless on the plain—
“ They bore me to the nearest hut—
“ They brought me into life again—
“ Me—one day o’er their realm to reign !
“ Thus the vain fool who strove to glut
“ His rage, refining on my pain,
“ Sent me forth to the wilderness,
“ Bound, naked, bleeding, and alone,
“ To pass the desert to a throne.—
“ What mortal his own doom may guess ?—
“ Let none despond, let none despair !

« To-morrow the Borysthenes
 « May see our coursers graze at ease
 « Upon his Turkish bank,—and never
 « Had I such welcome for a river
 « As I shall yield when safely there.
 « Comrades, good night ! »—The Hetman threw
 His length beneath the oak-tree shade,
 With leafy couch already made,
 A bed nor comfortless nor new
 To him, who took his rest whene'er
 The hour arrived, no matter where:—
 His eyes the hastening slumbers steep.
 And if ye marvel Charles forgot
 To thank his tale, *he* wonder'd not,—
 The king had been an hour asleep.

SONNET ON CHILLON.

Break at spirit of the chateaux mind !
Brightest in dungeons, Liberty ! thou art,
For there thy habitation is the heart—
The heart which love or **THE** alone can bind ;
And when thy sons to fetters are consign'd—

PRISONER OF CHILLON.

Their country conquers with their martyrdom,
And Freedom's banner waves on every wind.
Chillon ! thy prison is a holy place,
A FABLE.

And thy sad floor an altar—for 'twas trod,
Until her very steps have left a trace
Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
By Bonivard !—May some those marks efface !
For they appeal from tyranny to God.

• To-cure the poor phreos
 • May see our countrymen at ease
 • Upon the Tiber's bank—no more
 • That I seek refuge for a slave
 • As I shall yield, when safety there
 • Canvases, good night!—The Roman there
 His length beneath the oak-tree shade,
 With heavy couch already made,
 A bed our countrymen are used
 To him, who had his rest where'er
 The hour arrived, no matter where—
 His eyes the bustling world did keep

PRISONER OF CHILLON
 A FABLE

SONNET ON CHILLON.

ETERNAL spirit of the chainless mind !

Brightest in dungeons, Liberty ! thou art,

For there thy habitation is the heart—

The heart which love of thee alone can bind ;

And when thy sons to fetters are consigned—

To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom,

Their country conquers with their martyrdom,

And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.

Chillon ! thy prison is a holy place,

And thy sad floor an altar—for 'twas trod,

Until his very steps have left a trace

Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,

By Bonnivard ! —May none those marks efface !

For they appeal from tyranny to God.

SONNET ON CHILLON.

INTERNAL spirit of the chainless mind !
Brightest in dungeons, labours ! then art,
For there the habitation is the heart—
The heart which love of thee alone can bind,
And when thy sons to fetters are consigned—
To fetters, and the damp vault's dappled gloom,
Their country conquers with their martyrdom,
And Freedom's lame halls wings on every wind,
Chillon ! thy prison is a holy place,
And thy sad floor an altar—for 'twas there
That his very steps have left a trace
Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
By Bonivard !—May none those marks efface !
For they appeal from tyranny to God.

THE

PRISONER OF CHILLON.

I.

My hair is grey, but not with years,
Nor grew it white
In a single night,²

As men's have grown from sudden fears :

My limbs are bowed, though not with toil,
But rusted with a vile repose,

For they have been a dungeon's spoil,

And mine has been the fate of those

To whom the goodly earth and air

Are bann'd, and barr'd—forbidden fare;

But this was for my father's faith

I suffered chains and courted death;

That father perish'd at the stake

For tenets he would not forsake;

And for the same his lineal race

In darkness found a dwelling-place.

We were seven—who now are one,

Six in youth, and one in age,

Finish'd as they had begun,

Proud of persecution's rage;

One in fire, and two in field,

Their belief with blood have seal'd;

Dying as their father died,
For the God their foes denied ;
Three were in a dungeon cast,
Of whom this wreck is left the last.

II.

There are seven pillars of gothic mold,
In Chillon's dungeons deep and old ;
There are seven columns, massy and grey,
Dim with a dull imprisoned ray,
A sunbeam which hath lost its way,
And through the crevice and the cleft
Of the thick wall is fallen and left ;
Creeping o'er the floor so damp,
Like a marsh's meteor lamp :
And in each pillar there is a ring,
And in each ring there is a chain ;
That iron is a cankering thing,
For in these limbs its teeth remain,
With marks that will not wear away,
Till I have done with this new day,
Which now is painful to these eyes
Which have not seen the sun so rise
For years—I cannot count them o'er,
I lost their long and heavy score,
When my last brother droop'd and died,
And I lay living by his side.

III.

They chain'd us each to a column stone,
And we were three—yet, each alone,
We could not move a single pace,
We could not see each other's face,

But with that pale and livid light
 That made us strangers in our sight;
 And thus together—yet apart,
 Fettered in hand, but pined in heart;
 'Twas still some solace in the dearth
 Of the pure elements of earth,
 To hearken to each other's speech,
 And each turn comforter to each,
 With some new hope, or legend old,
 Or song heroically bold;
 But even these at length grew cold.
 Our voices took a dreary tone,
 An echo of the dungeon-stone,
 A grating sound—not full and free
 As they of yore were wont to be:
 It might be fancy—but to me
 They never sounded like our own.

IV.

I was the eldest of the three,
 And to uphold and cheer the rest
 I ought to do—and did my best—
 And each did well in his degree.
 The youngest, whom my father loved,
 Because our mother's brow was given
 To him—with eyes as blue as heaven,
 For him my soul was sorely moved;
 And truly might it be distress
 To see such bird in such a nest;
 For he was beautiful as day—
 (When day was beautiful to me
 As to young eagles, being free)—
 A polar day, which will not see
 A sunset till its summer's gone,

Its sleepless summer of long light,
 The snow-clad offspring of the sun :
 And thus he was as pure and bright,
 And in his natural spirit gay,
 With tears for nought but others' ills,
 And then they flowed like mountain rills,
 Unless he could assuage the woe
 Which he abhorr'd to view below.

V.

The other was as pure of mind,
 But formed to combat with his kind ;
 Strong in his frame, and of a mood
 Which 'gainst the world in war had stood,
 And perish'd in the foremost rank

With joy :—but not in chains to pine :
 His spirit withered with their clank,
 I saw it silently decline—

And so perchance in sooth did mine ;
 But yet I forced it on to cheer
 Those relics of a home so dear.
 He was a hunter of the hills,

Had followed there the deer and wolf ;
 To him this dungeon was a gulf,
 And fettered feet the worst of ills.

VI.

Lake Lemán lies by Chillon's walls :
 A thousand feet in depth below
 Its massy waters meet and flow ;
 Thus much the fathom-line was sent
 From Chillon's snow-white battlement,³
 Which round about the wave enthralls :

A double dungeon wall and wave
Have made—and like a living grave.
Below the surface of the lake
The dark vault lies wherein we lay,
We heard it ripple night and day;
 Sounding o'er our heads it knock'd;
And I have felt the winter's spray
Wash through the bars when winds were high
And wanton in the happy sky;
 And then the very rock hath rock'd,
 And I have felt it shake, unshock'd,
Because I could have smiled to see
The Death that would have set me free.

VII.

I said my nearer brother pined,
I said his mighty heart declined,
He loath'd and put away his food;
It was not that 'twas coarse and rude,
For we were used to hunter's fare,
And for the like had little care :
The milk drawn from the mountain goat
Was changed for water from the moat,
Our bread was such as captive's tears
Have moisten'd many a thousand years,
Since man first pent his fellow men
Like brutes within an iron den :
But what were these to us or him?
These wasted not his heart or limb;
My brother's soul was of that mold
Which in a palace had grown cold,
Had his free breathing been denied
The range of the steep mountain's side;
But why delay the truth?—he died.

I saw and could not hold his head,
Nor reach his dying hand—nor dead,
Though hard I strove, but strove in vain,
To rend and gnash my bonds in twain.
He died—and they unlocked his chain,
And scoop'd for him a shallow grave
Even from the cold earth of our cave.
I begg'd them, as a boon, to lay
His corse in dust whereon the day
Might shine—it was a foolish thought,
But then within my brain it wrought,
That even in death his freeborn breast
In such a dungeon could not rest.
I might have spared my idle prayer—
They coldly laugh'd—and laid him there :
The flat and turfless earth above
The being we so much did love ;
His empty chain above it leant,
Such murder's fitting monument !

VIII.

But he, the favorite and the flower,
Most cherish'd since his natal hour,
His mother's image in fair face,
The infant love of all his race,
His martyred father's dearest thought,
My latest care, for whom I sought
To hoard my life, that his might be
Less wretched now, and one day free ;
He, too, who yet had held untired
A spirit natural or inspired—
He, too, was struck, and day by day
Was withered on the stalk away.

Oh God! it is a fearful thing
To see the human soul take wing
In any shape, in any mood:—
I've seen it rushing forth in blood,
I've seen it on the breaking ocean
Strive with a swoln convulsive motion;
I've seen the sick and ghastly bed
Of Sin delirious with its dread:
But these were horrors—this was woe
Unmix'd with such—but sure and slow:
He faded, and so calm and meek,
So softly worn, so sweetly weak,
So tearless, yet so tender—kind,
And grieved for those he left behind;
With all the while a cheek whose bloom
Was as a mockery of the tomb,
Whose tints as gently sunk away
As a departing rainbow's ray—
An eye of most transparent light,
That almost made the dungeon bright,
And not a word of murmur—not
A groan o'er his untimely lot,—
A little talk of better days,
A little hope my own to raise;
For I was sunk in silence—lost
In this last loss, of all the most;
And then the sighs he would suppress
Of fainting nature's feebleness,
More slowly drawn, grew less and less:
I listened, but I could not hear—
I called, for I was wild with fear;
I knew 'twas hopeless, but my dread
Would not be thus admonished;

I called, and thought I heard a sound—
I burst my chain with one strong bound,
And rush'd to him :—I found him not :
I only stirr'd in this black spot,
I only lived—*I* only drew
The accursed breath of dungeon-dew;
The last—the sole—the dearest link
Between me and the eternal brink,
Which bound me to my failing race,
Was broken in this fatal place.
One on the earth, and one beneath—
My brothers— both had ceased to breathe :
I took that hand which lay so still,
Alas! my own was full as chill;
I had not strength to stir, or strive,
But felt that I was still alive—
A frantic feeling, when we know
That what we love shall ne'er be so.
I know not why
I could not die,
I had no earthly hope—but faith,
And that forbade a selfish death.

IX.

What next befell me then and there
I know not well—I never knew—
First came the loss of light, and air,
And then of darkness too :
I had no thought, no feeling—none—
Among the stones I stood a stone,
And was, scarce conscious what I wist,
As shrubless crags within the mist;

For all was blank, and bleak, and grey,
It was not night—it was not day,
It was not even the dungeon—light,
So hateful to my heavy sight,
But vacancy absorbing space,
And fixedness—without a place;
There were no stars—no earth—no time—
No check—no change—no good—no crime—
But silence, and a stirless breath,
Which neither was of life nor death;
A sea of stagnant idleness,
Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless!

X.

A light broke in upon my brain,—
It was the carol of a bird;
It ceased, and then it came again,
The sweetest song ear ever heard;
And mine was thankful till my eyes
Ran over with the glad surprise,
And they that moment could not see
I was the mate of misery;
But then by dull degrees came back
My senses to their wonted track,
I saw the dungeon walls and floor
Close slowly round me as before;
I saw the glimmer of the sun
Creeping as it before had done;
But through the crevice where it came
That bird was perch'd, as fond and tame,
And tamer than upon the tree:
A lovely bird, with azure wings,
And song that said a thousand things,

And seem'd to say them all for me!
I never saw its like before,
I ne'er shall see its likeness more :
It seem'd like me to want a mate,
But was not half so desolate,
And it was come to love me when
None lived to love me so again,
And cheering from my dungeon's brink,
Had brought me back to feel and think.
I know not if it late were free,
Or broke its cage to perch on mine ;
But knowing well captivity,
Sweet bird ! I could not wish for thine !
Or if it were, in winged guise,
A visitant from Paradise ;
For—Heaven forgive that thought ! the while
Which made me both to weep and smile,
I sometimes deemed that it might be
My brother's soul come down to me ;
But then at last away it flew,
And then 'twas mortal—well I knew,
For he would never thus have flown,
And left me twice so doubly lone,—
Lone—as the corpse within its shroud,
Lone—as a solitary cloud,
A single cloud on a sunny day,
While all the rest of heaven is clear ;
A frown upon the atmosphere,
That hath no business to appear
When skies are blue, and earth is gay.

XI.

A kind of change came in my fate,
My keepers grew compassionate,

I know not what had made them so,
They were inured to sights of woe,
But so it was :—my broken chain
With links unfasten'd did remain,
And it was liberty to stride
Along my cell from side to side,
And up and down, and then athwart,
And tread it over every part ;
And round the pillars one by one,
Returning where my walk begun,
Avoiding only, as I trod,
My brothers' graves without a sod ;
For if I thought with heedless tread
My step profaned their lowly bed,
My breath came gaspingly and thick,
And my crush'd heart fell blind and sick.

XH.

I made a footing in the wall ;
It was not therefrom to escape,
For I had buried one and all
Who loved me in a human shape ;
And the whole earth would henceforth be
A wider prison unto me :
No child—no sire—no kin had I,
No partner in my misery ;
I thought of this, and I was glad,
For thought of them had made me mad ;
But I was curious to ascend
To my barr'd windows, and to bend
Once more, upon the mountains high,
The quiet of a loving eye.

XIII.

I saw them—and they were the same,
They were not changed like me in frame;
I saw their thousand years of snow
On high—their wide long lake below,
And the blue Rhone in fullest flow;
I heard the torrents leap and gush
O'er channell'd rock and broken bush;
I saw the white-wall'd distant town,
And whiter sails go skimming down;
And then there was a little isle,⁴
Which in my very face did smile,

 The only one in view;
A small green isle, it seem'd no more
Scarce broader than my dungeon floor,
But in it there were three tall trees,
And o'er it blew the mountain breeze,
And by it there were waters flowing,
And on it there were young flowers growing,
 Of gentle breath and hue.

The fish swam by the castle wall,
And they seemed joyous each and all;
The eagle rode the rising blast,
Methought he never flew so fast
As then to me he seemed to fly,
And then new tears came in my eye,
And I felt troubled—and would fain
I had not left my recent chain;
And when I did descend again,
The darkness of my dim abode
Fell on me as a heavy load;
It was as is a new-dug grave,
Closing o'er one we sought to save,

And yet my glance, too much opprest,
Had almost need of such a rest.

XIV.

It might be months, or years, or days,
I kept no count—I took no note,
I had no hope my eyes to raise,
And clear them of their dreary mote;
At last men came to set me free,
I ask'd not why, and reck'd not where;
It was at length the same to me,
Fettered or fetterless to be:

I learn'd to love despair.
And thus when they appear'd at last,
And all my bonds aside were cast,
These heavy walls to me had grown
A hermitage—and all my own!
And half I felt as they were come
To tear me from a second home:
With spiders I had friendship made,
And watch'd them in their sullen trade,
Had seen the mice by moonlight play,
And why should I feel less than they?
We were all inmates of one place,
And I, the monarch of each race,
Had power to kill—yet, strange to tell!
In quiet we had learn'd to dwell—
My very chains and I grew friends,
So much a long communion tends
To make us what we are:—Even I
Regain'd my freedom with a sigh.

NOTES.

Note 1, page 141, line 13.

By Bonnivard!—May none those marks efface!

François de Bonnivard, fils de Louis de Bonnivard, originaire de Seyssel et seigneur de Lunes, naquit en 1496 ; il fit ses études à Turin : en 1510 Jean-Aimé de Bonnivard, son oncle, lui résigna le prieuré de Saint-Victor, qui aboutissait aux murs de Genève et qui formait un bénéfice considérable.

Ce grand homme (Bonnivard mérite ce titre par la force de son âme, la droiture de son cœur, la noblesse de ses intentions, la sagesse de ses conseils, le courage de ses démarches, l'étendue de ses connaissances et la vivacité de son esprit), ce grand homme, qui excitera l'admiration de tous ceux qu'une vertu heroïque peut encore émouvoir, inspirera encore la plus vive reconnaissance dans les cœurs des Genevois qui aiment Genève ; Bonnivard en fut toujours un des plus fermes appuis : pour assurer la liberté de notre république, il ne craignit pas de perdre souvent la sienne ; il oublia son repos ; il méprisa ses richesses ; il ne négligea rien pour affermir le bonheur d'une patrie qu'il honora de son choix ; dès ce moment il la chérit comme le plus zélé de ses concitoyens ; il la servit avec l'intrépidité d'un héros, et il écrivit son Histoire avec la naïveté d'un philosophe et la chaleur d'un patriote.

Il dit dans le commencement de son Histoire de Genève, que, *dès qu'il eut commencé de lire l'histoire des nations, il se sentit entraîné par son goût pour les républiques, dont il épousa toujours les intérêts* : c'est ce goût pour la liberté qui lui fit sans doute adopter Genève pour sa patrie.

Bonnivard, encore jeune, s'annonça hautement comme le défenseur de Genève contre le duc de Savoye et l'Évêque.

En 1519, Bonnivard devint le martyr de sa patrie : le

duc de Savoye étant entré dans Genève avec cinq cents hommes, Bonnivard craignit le ressentiment du duc ; il voulut se retirer à Fribourg pour en éviter les suites ; mais il fut trahi par deux hommes qui l'accompagnaient, et conduit par ordre du prince à Grolée, où il resta prisonnier pendant deux ans. Bonnivard était malheureux dans ses voyages : comme ses malheurs n'avaient point ralenti son zèle pour Genève, il était toujours un ennemi redoutable pour ceux qui la menaçaient, et par conséquent il devait être exposé à leurs coups. Il fut rencontré en 1530 sur le Jura, par des voleurs, qui le dépouillèrent, et qui le mirent encore entre les mains du duc de Savoye : ce prince le fit enfermer dans le château de Chillon, où il resta sans être interrogé jusqu'en 1536 ; il fut alors délivré par les Bernois, qui s'emparèrent du Pays de Vaud.

Bonnivard, en sortant de sa captivité, eut le plaisir de trouver Genève libre et réformée : la république s'empressa de lui témoigner sa reconnaissance et de le dédommager des maux qu'il avait soufferts ; elle le reçut bourgeois de la ville au mois de juin 1536 ; elle lui donna la maison habitée autrefois par le vicaire-général, et elle lui assigna une pension de 200 écus d'or tant qu'il séjournerait à Genève. Il fut admis dans le conseil des Deux-Cents en 1537.

Bonnivard continua d'être utile : après avoir travaillé à rendre Genève libre, il réussit à la rendre tolérante. Bonnivard engagea le conseil à accorder aux ecclésiastiques et aux paysans un temps suffisant pour examiner les propositions qu'on leur faisait ; il réussit par sa douceur : on prêche toujours le christianisme avec succès quand on le prêche avec charité.

Bonnivard fut savant ; ses manuscrits, qui sont dans la bibliothèque publique, prouvent qu'il avait bien lu les auteurs classiques latins, et qu'il avait approfondi la théologie et l'histoire. Ce grand homme aimait les sciences, et il croyait qu'elles pouvaient faire la gloire de Genève ; aussi il ne négligea rien pour les fixer dans cette ville naissante ; en 1551 il donna sa bibliothèque au public ; elle fut le commencement de notre bibliothèque publique ; et ses livres sont en partie les rares et belles éditions du quinzième siècle qu'on voit dans notre collection. Enfin, pendant la même

année, ce bon patriote institua la république son héritière, à condition qu'elle emploierait ses biens à entretenir le collège dont on projetait la fondation.

Il paraît que Bonnivard mourut en 1570; mais on ne peut l'assurer, parce qu'il y a une lacune dans le nécrologe depuis le mois de juillet 1570 jusqu'en 1571.

Note 2, p. 143, line 3.

In a single night.

Ludovico Sforza, and others.—The same is asserted of Marie Antoinette's, the wife of Louis XVI, though not in quite so short a period. Grief is said to have the same effect: to such, and not to fear, this change in *her's* was to be attributed.

Note 3, p. 146, line 26.

From Chillon's snow-white battlement.

The Chateau de Chillon is situated between Clarens and Villeneuve, which last is at one extremity of the Lake of Geneva. On its left are the entrances of the Rhone, and opposite are the Heights of Melleirie and the range of Alps above Boveret and St. Gingo.

Near it, on a hill behind, is a torrent; below it, washing its walls, the lake has been fathomed to the depth of 800 feet (French measure); within it are a range of dungeons, in which the early reformers, and subsequently prisoners of state, were confined. Across one of the vaults is a beam black with age, on which we were informed that the condemned were formerly executed. In the cells are seven pillars, or, rather, eight, one being half merged in the wall; in some of these are rings for the fetters and the fettered: in the pavement the steps of Bonnivard have left their traces—he was confined here several years.

It is by this castle that Rousseau has fixed the catastrophe of his *Héloïse*, in the rescue of one of her children by Julie from the water; the shock of which, and the illness produced by the immersion, is the cause of her death.

The chateau is large, and seen along the lake for a great distance. The walls are white.

Note 4, page 154, line 10.

And then there was a little isle.

Between the entrances of the Rhone and Villeneuve, not far from Chillon, is a very small island; the only one I could perceive, in my voyage round and over the lake, within its circumference. It contains a few trees, (I think not above three,) and from its singleness and diminutive size has a peculiar effect upon the view.

When the foregoing poem was composed I was not sufficiently aware of the history of Bonnivard, or I should have endeavoured to dignify the subject by an attempt to celebrate his courage and his virtues. Some account of his life will be found in a note appended to the « Sonnet on Chillon, » with which I have been furnished by the kindness of a citizen of that republic which is still proud of the memory of a man worthy of the best age of ancient freedom.

SONNET.

ROUSSEAU—Voltaire—our Gibbon—and de Staël—
Leman (1)! these names are worthy of thy shore,
Thy shore of names like these, wert thou no more,
Their memory thy remembrance would recall:
To them thy banks were lovely as to all,
But they have made them lovelier, for the lore
Of mighty minds doth hallow in the core
Of human hearts the ruin of a wall
Where dwelt the wise and wondrous; but by *thee*
How much more, Lake of Beauty! do we feel,
In sweetly glidding o'er thy crystal sea,
The wild glow of that not ungentle zeal,
Which of the heirs of immortality
Is proud, and makes the breath of glory real!

(1) Geneva, Ferney, Coppet, Lausanne.

LAMENT OF TASSO.

THE

At Ferrara (in the library) are preserved the original MSS. of Tasso's *Gerusalemme*, and of Guarini's *Pastor Fido*, with letters of Tasso, one from Titian to Ariosto; and the ink-stand and chair, the tomb and the house of the latter. But as misfortune has a greater interest for posterity, and little or none for the cotemporary, the cell where Tasso was confined in the hospital of St. Anna attracts a more fixed attention than the residence or the monument of Ariosto—at least it had this effect on me. There are two inscriptions, one on the outer gate, the second over the cell itself, inviting, unnecessarily, the wonder and the indignation of the spectator. Ferrara is much decayed and depopulated; the castle still exists entire; and I saw the court where Parisina and Hugo were beheaded, according to the annal of Gibbon.

THE
LAMENT OF TASSO.

I.

LONG years!—It tries the thrilling frame to bear
And eagle-spirit of a Child of Song—
Long years of outrage, calumny and wrong ;
Imputed madness, prisoned solitude,
And the mind's canker in its savage mood,
When the impatient thirst of light and air
Parches the heart ; and the abhorred grate,
Marring the sunbeams with its hideous shade,
Works through the throbbing eyeball to the brain
With a hot sense of heaviness and pain ;
And bare, at once, Captivity displayed
Stands scoffing through the never-opened gate,
Which nothing through its bars admits, save day
And tasteless food, which I have eat alone
Till its unsocial bitterness is gone ;
And I can banquet like a beast of prey,
Sullen and lonely, couching in the cave
Which is my lair, and—it may be—my grave.
All this hath somewhat worn me, and may wear,
But must be borne. I stoop not to despair ;
For I have battled with mine agony,
And made me wings wherewith to overfly
The narrow circus of my dungeon wall,
And freed the Holy Sepulchre from thrall ;

And revelled among men and things divine,
And poured my spirit over Palestine,
In honour of the sacred war for him,
The God who was on earth and is in heaven,
For he hath strengthened me in heart and limb.
That through this sufferance I might be forgiven,
I have employed my penance to record
How Salem's shrine was won, and how adored.

II.

But this is o'er—my pleasant task is done:—
My long-sustaining friend of many years!
If I do blot thy final page with tears,
Know, that my sorrows have wrung from me none.
But thou, my young creation! my soul's child!
Which ever playing round me came and smiled,
And wooed me from myself with thy sweet sight,
Thou too art gone—and so is my delight:
And therefore do I weep and inly bleed
With this last bruise upon a broken reed.
Thou too art ended—what is left me now?
For I have anguish yet to bear—and how?
I know not that—but in the innate force
Of my own spirit shall be found resource.
I have not sunk, for I had no remorse,
Nor cause for such: they called me mad—and why?
Oh Leonora! wilt not *thou* reply?
I was indeed delirious in my heart
To lift my love so lofty as thou art;
But still my frenzy was not of the mind;
I knew my fault, and feel my punishment
Not less because I suffer it unbent.
That thou wert beautiful, and I not blind,
Hath been the sin which shuts me from mankind;

But let them go, or torture as they will,
My heart can multiply thine image still ;
Successful love may sate itself away,
The wretched are the faithful ; 'tis their fate
To have all feeling save the one decay,
And every passion into one dilate,
As rapid rivers into ocean pour ;
But ours is fathomless, and hath no shore.

III.

Above me, hark ! the long and maniac cry
Of minds and bodies in captivity.
And hark ! the lash and the increasing howl,
And the half-inarticulate blasphemy !
There be some here with worse than frenzy foul,
Some who do still goad on the o'er-laboured mind,
And dim the little light that's left behind
With needless torture, as their tyrant will
Is wound up to the lust of doing ill :
With these and with their victims am I classed,
'Mid sounds and sights like these long years have passed ;
'Mid sights and sounds like these my life may close :
So let it be—for then I shall repose.

IV.

I have been patient, let me be so yet ;
I had forgotten half I would forget,
But it revives—oh ! would it were my lot
To be forgetful as I am forgot !—
Feel I not wroth with those who bade me dwell
In this vast lazar-house of many woes ?
Where laughter is not mirth, nor thought the mind,
Nor words a language, nor ev'n men mankind ;

Where cries reply to curses, shrieks to blows,
And each is tortured in his separate hell—
For we are crowded in our solitudes—
Many, but each divided by the wall,
Which echoes Madness in her babbling moods ;—
While all can hear, none heed his neighbour's call—
None ! save that One, the veriest wretch of all,
Who was not made to be the mate of these,
Nor bound between distraction and disease.
Feel I not wroth with those who placed me here?
Who have debased me in the minds of men,
Debarring me the usage of my own,
Blighting my life in best of its career,
Branding my thoughts as things to shun and fear?
Would I not pay them back these pangs again,
And teach them inward sorrow's stifled groan?
The struggle to be calm, and cold distress,
Which undermines our stoical success?
No—still too proud to be vindictive—I
Have pardoned princes' insults, and would die.
Yes, Sister of my Sovereign ! for thy sake
I weed all bitterness from out my breast,
It hath no business where *thou* art a guest ;
Thy brother hates—but I can not detest ;
Thou pitiest not—but I cannot forsake.

V.

Look on a love which knows not to despair,
But all unquenched is still my better part,
Dwelling deep in my shut and silent heart
As dwells the gathered lightning in its cloud,
Encompassed with its dark and rolling shroud,
Till struck,—forth flies the all-etherial dart !

And thus at the collision of thy name
The vivid thought still flashes through my frame,
And for a moment all things as they were
Flit by me;—they are gone—I am the same.
And yet my love without ambition grew;
I knew thy state, my station, and I knew
A princess was no love-mate for a bard;
I told it not, I breathed it not, it was
Sufficient to itself, its own reward;
And if my eyes revealed it, they, alas!
Were punished by the silentness of thine,
And yet I did not venture to repine.
Thou wert to me a crystal-girded shrine,
Worshipped at holy distance, and around
Hallowed and meekly kissed the saintly ground;
Not for thou wert a princess, but that Love
Had robed thee with a glory, and arrayed
Thy lineaments in beauty that dismayed—
Oh! not dismayed—but awed, like One above—
And in that sweet severity there was
A something which all softness did surpass—
I know not how—thy genius mastered mine—
My star stood still before thee:—if it were
Presumptuous thus to love without design,
That sad fatality hath cost me dear;
But thou art dearest still, and I should be
Fit for this cell, which wrongs me, but for *thee*.
The very love which locked me to my chain
Hath lightened half its weight; and for the rest,
Though heavy, lent me vigour to sustain,
And look to thee with undivided breast,
And foil the ingenuity of pain.

VI.

It is no marvel—from my very birth
My soul was drunk with love, which did pervade
And mingle with whate'er I saw on earth ;
Of objects all inanimate I made
Idols, and out of wild and lonely flowers,
And rocks, whereby they grew, a paradise,
Where I did lay me down within the shade
Of waving trees, and dreamed uncounted hours,
Though I was chid for wandering ; and the wise
Shook their white aged heads o'er me, and said
Of such materials wretched men were made,
And such a truant boy would end in woe,
And that the only lesson was a blow ;
And then they smote me, and I did not weep,
But cursed them in my heart, and to my haunt
Returned and wept alone, and dreamed again
The visions which arise without a sleep.
And with my years my soul began to pant
With feelings of strange tumult and soft pain ;
And the whole heart exhaled into one want,
But undefined and wandering, till the day
I found the thing I sought—and that was thee ;
And then I lost my being all to be
Absorbed in thine—the world was past away—
Thou didst annihilate the earth to me !

VII.

I loved all solitude—but little thought
To spend I know not what of life, remote
From all communion with existence, save
The maniac and his tyrant ; had I been

Their fellow, many years ere this had seen
 My mind like theirs corrupted to its grave,
 But who hath seen me writhe, or heard me rave?
 Perchance in such a cell we suffer more
 Than the wrecked sailor on his desert shore;
 The world is all before him—*mine is here*,
 Scarce twice the space they must accord my bier.
 What though *he* perish, he may lift his eye,
 And with a dying glance upbraid the sky—
 I will not raise my own in such reproof,
 Although 'tis clouded by my dungeon roof.

VIII.

Yet do I feel at times my mind decline,
 But with a sense of its decay:—I see
 Unwonted lights along my prison shine,
 And a strange demon, who is vexing me
 With pilfering pranks and petty pains, below
 The feeling of the healthful and the free;
 But much to One, who long hath suffered so,
 Sickness of heart, and narrowness of place,
 And all that may be borne, or can debase.
 I thought mine enemies had been but man,
 But spirits may be leagued with them—all Earth
 Abandons—Heaven forgets me;—in the dearth
 Of such defence the Powers of Evil can,
 It may be, tempt me further, and prevail
 Against the outworn creature they assail.
 Why in this furnace is my spirit proved
 Like steel in tempering fire? because I loved?
 Because I loved what not to love, and see,
 Was more or less than mortal, and than me.

IX.

I once was quick in feeling—that is o'er ;—
My scars are callous, or I should have dashed
My brain against these bars as the sun flashed
In mockery through them ;—if I bear and bore
The much I have recounted, and the more
Which hath no words, 'tis that I would not die
And sanction with self-slaughter the dull lie
Which snared me here, and with the brand of shame
Stamp madness deep into my memory,
And woo compassion to a blighted name,
Sealing the sentence which my foes proclaim.
No—it shall be immortal !—and I make
A future temple of my present cell,
Which nations yet shall visit for my sake.
While thou, Ferrara ! when no longer dwell
The ducal chiefs within thee, shalt fall down,
And crumbling piecemeal view thy hearthless halls,
A poet's wreath shall be thine only crown,
A poet's dungeon thy most far renown,
While strangers wonder o'er thy unpeopled walls !
And thou, Leonora ! thou—who wert ashamed
That such as I could love—who blushed to hear
To less than monarchs that thou could'st be dear,
Go ! tell thy brother that my heart, untamed
By grief, years, weariness—and it may be
A taint of that he would impute to me—
From long infection of a den like this,
Where the mind rots congenial with the abyss,
Adores thee still ;—and add—that when the towers
And battlements which guard his joyous hours

Of banquet, dance, and revel, are forgot,
Or left untended in a dull repose,
This—this shall be a consecrated spot!
But Thou—when all that Birth and Beauty throws
Of magic round thee is extinct—shalt have
One half the laurel which o’ershades my grave.
No power in death can tear our names apart,
As none in life could rend thee from my heart.
Yes, Leonora! it shall be our fate
To be entwined for ever—but too late!

SKETCH FROM PRIVATE LIFE.

"Honest—Honest—Honest!"
"If that thou be'st a devil, I reckon I'll thee!"
S. J. S. S. S.

VARIOUS POEMS.

Born in the garret, to the kitchen fire,
Promised thence to rise to the high air,
Next—for some power—
And then—
Rais'd to the
Her wondering beauty was like a star,
With eye removed, and forehead unbar'd,
She dined from off the plate she lately wash'd,
Quick with the tale, and ready with the laugh,
The genial confidence, and general appeal,
Who could, ye gods! her power so gloriously
An only infant's earliest parent?
She taught the child to read, and sang as well,
That she herself, by teaching, learned to spell,
An adept next in penmanship she grew,
As many a household monitor deftly shows,
What she had made the pupil of her art,
None know—but that high soul secured the heart,
And panted for the truth it could not bear,
With longing breast and unobscured ear.

Could'st thou perceive by that youthful mind,
Which flattery could not—hypocrisy could not blind,

VARIOUS POEMS.

A

SKETCH FROM PRIVATE LIFE.

• Honest—Honest Iago!

• If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee. »

SHAKESPEARE.

BORN in the garret, in the kitchen bred,
Promoted thence to deck her mistress' head;
Next—for some gracious service unexpressed,
And from its wages only to be guess'd—
Rais'd from the toilet to the table,—where
Her wondering betters wait behind her chair,
With eye unmoved, and forehead unabash'd,
She dines from off the plate she lately wash'd.
Quick with the tale, and ready with the lie—
The genial confidante, and general spy—
Who could, ye gods! her next employment guess—
An only infant's earliest governess!
She taught the child to read, and taught so well,
That she herself, by teaching, learned to spell.
An adept next in penmanship she grows,
As many a nameless slander deftly shows:
What she had made the pupil of her art,
None know—but that high soul secured the heart,
And panted for the truth it could not hear,
With longing breast and undeluded ear.

Foil'd was perversion by that youthful mind,
Which flattery fool'd not—baseness could not blind,

Deceit infect not—nor contagion soil—
Indulgence weaken—nor example spoil—
Nor master'd science tempt her to look down
On humbler talents with a pitying frown—
Nor Genius swell—nor Beauty render vain—
Nor Envy ruffle to retaliate pain—
Nor Fortune change—Pride raise—nor Passion bow,
Nor Virtue teach austerity—till now.
Serenely purest of her sex that live,
But wanting one sweet weakness—to forgive ;
Too shock'd at faults her soul can never know,
She deems that all could be like her below :
Foe to all vice, yet hardly Virtue's friend,
For Virtue pardons those she would amend.

But to the theme :—now laid aside too long,
The baleful burthen of this honest song—
Though all her former functions are no more,
She rules the circle which she served before.
If mothers—none know why—before her quake ;
If daughters dread her for the mother's sake ;
If early habits—those false links, which bind
At times the loftiest to the meanest mind—
Have given her power too deeply to instil
The angry essence of her deadly will ;
If, like a snake, she steal within your walls,
Till the black slime betray her as she crawls ;
If, like a viper, to the heart she wind,
And leave the venom there she did not find ;
What marvel that this hag of hatred works
Eternal evil latent as she lurks,
To make a Pandemonium where she dwells,
And reign the Hecate of domestic hells ?

Skill'd by a touch to deepen scandal's tints
With all the kind mendacity of hints,
While mingling truth with falsehood—sneers with smiles—
A thread of candour with a web of wiles;
A plain blunt show of briefly-spoken seeming,
To hide her bloodless heart's soul-harden'd scheming,
A lip of lies—a face formed to conceal;
And, without feeling, mock at all who feel:
With a vile mask the Gorgon would disown;
A cheek of parchment—and an eye of stone.
Mark, how the channels of her yellow blood
Ooze to her skin, and stagnate there to mud,
Cased like the centipede in saffron mail,
Or darker greenness of the scorpion's scale—
(For drawn from reptiles only may we trace
Congenial colours in that soul or face)—
Look on her features! and behold her mind
As in a mirror of itself defined:
Look on the picture! deem it not o'ercharged—
There is no trait which might not be enlarged;—
Yet true to « Nature's journeymen, » who made
This monster when their mistress left off trade,—
This female dog-star of her little sky,
Where all beneath her influence droop or die.

Oh! wretch without a tear—without a thought,
Save joy above the ruin thou hast wrought—
The time shall come, nor long remote, when thou
Shalt feel far more than thou inflictest now;
Feel for thy vile self-loving self in vain,
And turn thee howling in unpitied pain.
May the strong curse of crushed affections light
Back on thy bosom with reflected blight!

And make thee in thy leprosy of mind
As loathsome to thyself as to mankind?
Till all thy self-thoughts curdle into hate,
Black—as thy will for others would create:
Till thy hard heart be calcined into dust,
And thy soul welter in its hideous crust.
Oh! may thy grave be sleepless as the bed,—
The widow'd couch of fire, that thou hast spread!
Then, when thou fain would'st weary Heaven with prayer,
Look on thine earthly victims—and despair!
Down to the dust!—and, as thou rott'st away,
Even worms shall perish on thy poisonous clay.
But for the love I bore, and still must bear,
To her thy malice from all ties would tear—
Thy name—thy human name—to every eye
The climax of all scorn should hang on high,
Exalted o'er thy less abhorred compeers—
And festering in the infamy of years.

March 30, 1816.

MONODY

ON THE DEATH OF R. B. SHERIDAN.

Spoken at DRURY-LANE THEATRE.

WHEN the last sunshine of expiring day
In summer's twilight weeps itself away,
Who hath not felt the softness of the hour
Sink on the heart, as dew along the flower?
With a pure feeling which absorbs and awes,
While Nature makes that melancholy pause,
Her breathing moment on the bridge where Time
Of light and darkness forms an arch sublime,
Who hath not shared that calm so still and deep,
The voiceless thought which would not speak but weep,
A holy concord—and a bright regret,
A glorious sympathy with suns that set?
'Tis not harsh sorrow—but a tenderer woe,
Nameless, but dear to gentle hearts below,
Felt without bitterness—but full and clear,
A sweet dejection—a transparent tear
Unmixed with worldly grief or selfish stain,
Shed without shame—and secret without pain.
Even as the tenderness that hour instills
When Summer's day declines along the hills,
So feels the fulness of our heart and eyes
When all of Genius which can perish dies.
A mighty Spirit is eclipsed—a Power
Hath passed from day to darkness—to whose hour
Of light no likeness is bequeathed—no name,
Focus at once of all the rays of Fame!

The flash of Wit—the bright Intelligence,
The beam of Song—the blaze of Eloquence,
Set with their sun—but still have left behind
The enduring produce of immortal Mind ;
Fruits of a genial morn, and glorious noon,
A deathless part of him who died too soon.
But small that portion of the wondrous whole,
These sparkling segments of that circling soul,
Which all embraced—and lightened over all,
To cheer—to pierce—to please—or to appal.
From the charmed council to the festive board,
Of human feelings the unbounded lord ;
In whose acclaim the loftiest voices vied,
The praised—the proud—who made his praise their pride.

When the loud cry of trampled Hindostan
Arose to Heaven in her appeal from man,
His was the thunder—his the avenging rod,
The wrath—the delegated voice of God !
Which shook the nations through his lips—and blazed
Till vanquished senates trembled as they praised.

And here, oh ! here, where yet all young and warm
The gay creations of his spirit charm,
The matchless dialogue—the deathless wit,
Which knew not what it was to intermit ;
The glowing portraits, fresh from life, that bring
Home to our hearts the truth from which they spring ;
These wondrous beings of his fancy, wrought
To fulness by the *fiat* of his thought,
Here in their first abode you still may meet,
Bright with the hues of his Promethean heat ;
A halo of the light of other days,
Which still the splendour of its orb betrays.

But should there be to whom the fatal blight
Of failing Wisdom yields a base delight,
Men who exult when minds of heavenly tone
Jar in the music which was born their own,
Still let them pause—Ah ! little do they know
That what to them seemed vice might be but woe.
Hard is his fate on whom the public gaze
Is fixed for ever to detract or praise ;
Repose denies her requiem to his name,
And Folly loves the martyrdom of Fame.
The secret enemy whose sleepless eye
Stands sentinel—accuser—judge—and spy,
The foe—the fool—the jealous—and the vain,
The envious who but breathe in other's pain,
Behold the host ! delighting to deprave,
Who track the steps of Glory to the grave,
Watch every fault that daring Genius owes
Half to the ardour which its birth bestows,
Distort the truth, accumulate the lie,
And pile the pyramid of calumny !

These are his portion—but if joined to these
Gaunt Poverty should league with deep Disease,
If the high Spirit must forget to soar,
And stoop to strive with Misery at the door,
To sooth Indignity—and face to face
Meet sordid Rage—and wrestle with Disgrace,
To find in Hope but the renewed caress,
The serpent-fold of further Faithlessness,—
If such may be the ills which men assail,
What marvel if at last the mightiest fail ?
Breasts to whom all the strength of feeling given
Bear hearts electric—charged with fire from Heaven,

Black with the rude collision, inly torn,
By clouds surrounded, and on whirlwinds borne,
Driven o'er the lowering atmosphere that nurst
Thoughts which have turned to thunder—scorch—and
burst.

But far from us and from our mimic scene
Such things should be—if such have ever been ;
Our's be the gentler wish, the kinder task,
To give the tribute Glory need not ask,
To mourn the vanished beam—and add our mite
Of praise in payment of a long delight.

Ye orators ! whom yet our councils yield,
Mourn for the veteran hero of your field !
The worthy rival of the wondrous *Three* !
Whose words were sparks of immortality !
Ye Bards ! to whom the Drama's Muse is dear,
He was your master—emulate him *here* !
Ye men of wit and social eloquence !
He was your brother—bear his ashes hence !
While powers of mind almost of boundless range,
Complete in kind—as various in their change,
While Eloquence—Wit—Poesy—and Mirth,
That humbler harmonist of care on Earth,
Survive within our souls—while lives our sense
Of pride in merit's proud pre-eminence,
Long shall we seek his likeness—long in vain,
And turn to all of him which may remain,
Sighing that Nature formed but one such man,
And broke the die—in moulding SHERIDAN !

TO THYRZA.

I.

WITHOUT a stone to mark the spot,
And say, what Truth might well have said,
By all, save one, perchance forgot,
Ah, wherefore art thou lowly laid?
By many a shore and many a sea
Divided, yet beloved in vain;
The past, the future fled to thee
To bid us meet—no—ne'er again!
Could this have been—a word, a look
That softly said, "We part in peace,"
Had taught my bosom how to brook,
With fainter sighs, thy soul's release.
And didst thou not, since Death for thee
Prepared a light and pangless dart,
Once long for him thou ne'er shalt see,
Who held, and holds thee in his heart?
Oh! who like him had watched thee here?
Or sadly marked thy glazing eye,
In that dread hour ere Death appear,
When silent Sorrow fears to sigh,
Till all was past? But when no more
'Twas thine to reckon of human woe,
Affection's heart-drops, gushing o'er,
Had flowed as fast—as now they flow.
Shall they not flow, when many a day
In these, to me, deserted towers,
Ere called but for a time away,
Affection's mingling tears were ours?

Ours too the glance none saw beside ;
The smile none else might understand ;
The whispered thought of hearts allied,
The pressure of the thrilling hand ;
The kiss so guiltless and refined
That Love each warmer wish forbore ;
Those eyes proclaimed so pure a mind,
Ev'n passion blushed to plead for more.
The tone, that taught me to rejoice,
When prone, unlike thee, to repine ;
The song celestial from thy voice,
But sweet to me from none but thine ;
The pledge we wore—I wear it still,
But where is thine?—ah! where art thou?
Oft have I borne the weight of ill,
But never bent beneath till now!
Well hast thou left in life's best bloom
The cup of woe for me to drain.
If rest alone be in the tomb,
I would not wish thee here again ;
But if in worlds more blest than this
Thy virtues seek a fitter sphere,
Impart some portion of thy bliss,
To wean me from mine anguish here.
Teach me—too early taught by thee!
To bear, forgiving and forgiv'n :
On earth thy love was such to me ;
It fain would form my hope in heav'n!

TO THE SAME.

II.

1.

AWAY, away, ye notes of woe !

Be silent thou once soothing strain,
Or I must flee from hence, for, oh !

I dare not trust those sounds again.
To me they speak of brighter days—

But lull the chords, for now, alas !
I must not think, I may not gaze
On what I am, on what I was.

2.

The voice that made those sounds more sweet
Is hushed, and all their charms are fled ;

And now their softest notes repeat

A dirge, an anthem o'er the dead !

Yes, Thyrza ! yes, they breathe of thee,

Beloved dust ! since dust thou art ;

And all that once was harmony

Is worse than discord to my heart !

3.

'Tis silent all !—but on my ear

The well-remembered echoes thrill ;

I hear a voice I would not hear,

A voice that now might well be still,

Yet oft my doubting soul 'twill shake :

Ev'n slumber owns its gentle tone,

Till consciousness will vainly wake

To listen, though the dream be flown.

4.

Sweet Thyrza! waking as in sleep,
Thou art but now a lovely dream;
A star that trembled o'er the deep,
Then turned from earth its tender beam.
But he, who through life's dreary way
Must pass, when heav'n is veiled in wrath,
Will long lament the vanished ray
That scattered gladness o'er his path.

TO THE SAME.

III.

1.

ONE struggle more, and I am free
From pangs that rend my heart in twain;
One last long sigh to love and thee,
Then back to busy life again.
It suits me well to mingle now
With things that never pleased before:
Though every joy is fled below,
What future grief can touch me more?

2.

Then bring me wine, the banquet bring;
Man was not formed to live alone:
I'll be that light unmeaning thing
That smiles with all, and weeps with none.
It was not thus in days more dear,
It never would have been, but thou
Hast fled, and left me lonely here;
Thou'rt nothing, all are nothing now.

3.

In vain my lyre would lightly breathe!
The smile that sorrow fain would wear
But mocks the woe that lurks beneath,
Like roses o'er a sepulchre.
Though gay companions o'er the bowl
Dispel awhile the sense of ill;
Though pleasure fires the madd'ning soul,
The heart—the heart is lonely still!

4.

On many a lone and lovely night
It soothed to gaze upon the sky;
For then I deemed the heav'nly light
Shone sweetly on thy pensive eye;
And oft I thought at Cynthia's noon,
When sailing o'er the Ægean wave,
"Now Thyrza gazes on that moon—"
Alas! it gleamed upon her grave.

5.

When stretched on fever's sleepless bed,
And sickness shrunk my throbbing veins,
" 'Tis comfort still, " I faintly said,
" That Thyrza cannot know my pains : "
Like freedom to the time-worn slave,
A boon 'tis idle then to give,
Relenting Nature vainly gave
My life, when Thyrza ceased to live!

6.

My Thyrza's pledge in better days,
When love and life alike were new!
How different now thou meet'st my gaze!
How tinged by time with sorrow's hue!

The heart that gave itself with thee
Is silent—ah ! were mine as still !
Though cold as e'en the dead can be,
It feels, it sickens with the chill.

7.

Thou bitter pledge ! thou mournful token !
Though painful, welcome to my breast !
Still, still, preserve that love unbroken,
Or break the heart to which thou'rt prest !
Time tempers love, but not removes,
More hallowed when its hope is fled :
Oh ! what are thousand living loves
To that which cannot quit the dead ?

WRITTEN IN AN ALBUM.

As o'er the cold sepulchral stone
Some name arrests the passer-by ;
Thus, when thou view'st this page alone,
May mine attract thy pensive eye !

And when by thee that name is read,
Perchance in some succeeding year,
Reflect on me as on the dead,
And think my heart is buried here.

September 14th, 1809.

STANZAS

Composed October 11th, 1809, during the night, a thunder-storm ; when the guides had lost the road to Zitza, near the range of mountains formerly called Pindus, in Albania.

CHILL and mirk is the nightly blast,
Where Pindus' mountains rise,
And angry clouds are pouring fast
The vengeance of the skies.

Our guides are gone, our hope is lost,
And lightnings, as they play,
But show where rocks our path have crost,
Or gild the torrent's spray.

Is yon a cot I saw, though low?
When lightning broke the gloom—
How welcome were its shade!—ah! no!
'Tis but a Turkish tomb.

Through sounds of foaming waterfalls
I hear a voice exclaim—
My way-worn countryman, who calls
On distant England's name.

A shot is fired—by foe or friend?
Another—'tis to tell
The mountain-peasants to descend,
And lead us where they dwell.

Oh! who in such a night will dare
To tempt the wilderness?
And who 'mid thunder peals can hear
Our signal of distress?

And who that heard our shouts would rise .
To try the dubious road ?
Nor rather deem from nightly cries
That outlaws were abroad.

Clouds burst, skies flash, oh ! dreadful hour !
More fiercely pours the storm ?
Yet here one thought has still the power
To keep my bosom warm.

While wand'ring through each broken path,
O'er brake and craggy brow ;
While elements exhaust their wrath,
Sweet Florence, where art thou ?

Not on the sea, not on the sea,
Thy bark hath long been gone :
Oh ! may the storm that pours on me,
Bow down my head alone !

Full swiftly blew the swift Siroc,
When last I press'd thy lip ;
And long ere now, with foaming shock,
Impelled thy gallant ship.

Now thou art safe ; nay, long ere now
Hast trod the shore of Spain ;
'Twere hard if ought so fair as thou
Should linger on the main.

And since I now remember thee
In darkness and in dread,
As in those hours of revelry
Which mirth and music sped ;

Do thou amidst the fair white walls,
If Cadiz yet be free,
At times from out her latticed halls
Look o'er the dark blue sea ;

Then think upon Calypso's isles,
Endeared by days gone by ;
To others give a thousand smiles,
To me a single sigh.

And when the admiring circle mark
The paleness of thy face,
A half formed tear, a transient spark
Of melancholy grace,

Again thou'lt smile, and blushing shun
Some coxcomb's raillery ;
Nor own for once thou thought'st of one
Who ever thinks on thee.

Though smile and sigh alike are vain,
When severed hearts repine,
My spirit flies o'er mount and main,
And mourns in search of thine.

FAREWELL.

FAREWELL! if ever fondest prayer
For other's weal availed on high,
Mine will not all be lost in air,
But waft thy name beyond the sky.
'Twere vain to speak, to weep, to sigh :
Oh! more than tears of blood can tell,
When wrung from guilt's expiring eye,
Are in that word—Farewell!—Farewell!

These lips are mute, these eyes are dry;
But in my breast, and in my brain,
Awake the pangs that pass not by,
The thought that ne'er shall sleep again.
My soul nor deigns nor dares complain,
Though grief and passion there rebel;
I only know we loved in vain—
I only feel—Farewell! Farewell!

TO A YOUTHFUL FRIEND.

Few years have passed since thou and I
Were firmest friends, at least in name,
And childhood's gay sincerity
Preserved our feelings long the same.

But now, like me, too well thou know'st
What trifles oft the heart recall;
And those who once have loved the most,
Too soon forget they loved at all.

And such the change the heart displays,
So frail is early friendship's reign,
A month's brief lapse, perhaps a day's,
Will view thy mind estranged again.

If so, it never shall be mine
To mourn the loss of such a heart;
The fault was Nature's fault, not thine,
Which made thee fickle as thou art.

As rolls the Ocean's changing tide,
So human feelings ebb and flow;
And who would in a breast confide
Where stormy passions ever glow?

It boots not, that together bred,
Our childish days were days of joy;
My spring of life has quickly fled;
Thou, too, hast ceased to be a boy.

And when we bid adieu to youth,
Slaves to the specious world's controul,
We sigh a long farewell to truth;
That world corrupts the noblest soul.

Ah ! joyous season ! when the mind
Dares all things boldly but to lie ;
When thought ere spoke is unconfined,
And sparkles in the placid eye.

Not so in man's maturer years,
When man himself is but a tool ;
When interest sways our hopes and fears,
And all must love and hate by rule.

With fools in kindred vice the same,
We learn at length our faults to blend,
And those, and those alone may claim
The prostituted name of friend.

Such is the common lot of man :
Can we then 'scape from folly free ?
Can we reverse the general plan,
Nor be what all in turn must be ?

No, for myself, so dark my fate
Through every turn of life hath been ;
Man and the world I so much hate,
I care not when I quit the scene.

Eut thou, with spirit frail and light,
Wilt shine awhile and pass away ;
As glow-worms sparkle through the night,
But dare not stand the test of day.

Alas! whenever folly calls
Where parasites and princes meet,
(For cherished first in royal halls,
The welcome vices kindly greet),

E'en now thou'rt nightly seen to add
One insect to the fluttering crowd;
And still thy trifling heart is glad
To join the vain and court the proud.

There dost thou glide from fair to fair,
Still simpering on with eager haste,
As flies along the gay parterre,
That taint the flowers they scarcely taste.

But say, what nymph will prize the flame
Which seems, as marshy vapours move,
To flit along from dame to dame,
An ignis-fatuus gleam of love?

What friend for thee, howe'er inclined,
Will deign to own a kindred care?
Who will debase his manly mind
For friendship every fool may share?

In time forbear; amidst the throng
No more so base a thing be seen;
No more so idly pass along:
Be something, any thing, but—mean.

The cold repulse, the look of shame,
The lightning of Love's angry glance.

TO SAMUEL ROGERS, ESQ.

ABSENT or present, still to thee,
My friend, what magic spells belong !
As all can tell, who share, like me,
In turn thy converse, and thy song.
But when the dreaded hour shall come
By friendship ever deemed too nigh,
And « MEMORY » o'er her Druid's tomb
Shall sweep that aught of thee can die,
How fondly will She then repay
Thy homage offered at her shrine,
And blend, while Ages roll away,
Her name immortally with thine !

April 19th, 1812.

ON A CORNELIAN HEART

WHICH WAS BROKEN.

ILL-FATED Heart ! and can it be
That thou should'st thus be rent in twain ?
Have years of care for thine and thee
Alike been all employed in vain ?
Yet precious seems each shattered part,
And every fragment dearer grown,
Since he who wears thee, feels thou art
A fitter emblem of *his own*.

TRANSLATION
OF
A ROMAIC LOVE SONG.

AN ! Love was never yet without
The pang, the agony, the doubt,
Which rends my heart with ceaseless sigh,
While day and night roll darkling by.

Without one friend to hear my wee,
I faint, I die beneath the blow.
That Love had arrows, well I knew ;
Alas ! I find them poisoned too.

Birds, yet in freedom, shun the net
Which Love around your haunts hath set ;
Or circled by his fatal fire,
Your hearts shall burn, your hopes expire.

A bird of free and careless wing
Was I, through many a smiling spring ;
But caught within the subtle snare,
I burn, and feebly flutter there.

Who ne'er have loved, and loved in vain,
Can neither feel nor pity pain,
The cold repulse, the look askance,
The lightning of Love's angry glance.

In flattering dreams I deemed thee mine ;
Now hope, and he who hoped, decline ;
Like melting wax, or withering flower,
I feel my passion, and thy power.

My light of life ! ah ! tell me why
That pouting lip, and altered eye ?
My bird of love ! my beauteous mate !
And art thou changed, and can'st thou hate ?

Mine eyes like wintry streams o'erflow :
What wretch with me would barter woe ?
My bird ! relent : one note could give
A charm, to bid thy lover live.

My curdling blood, my madd'ning brain,
In silent anguish I sustain ;
And still thy heart, without partaking
One pang, exults—while mine is breaking.

Pour me the poison ; fear not thou !
Thou can'st not murder more than now :
I've lived to curse my natal day,
And Love, that thus can lingering slay.

My wounded soul, my bleeding breast,
Can patience preach thee into rest ?
Alas ! too late, I dearly know,
That joy is harbinger of woe.

STANZAS TO ***.

I.

IF sometimes in the haunts of men
Thine image from my breast may fade,
The lonely hour presents again
The semblance of thy gentle shade :
And now that sad and silent hour
Thus much of thee can still restore,
And sorrow unobserved may pour
The plaint she dare not speak before.

2.

Oh ! pardon that in crowds awhile,
I waste one thought I owe to thee,
And, self-condemned, appear to smile,
Unfaithful to thy memory !
Nor deem that memory less dear,
That then I seem not to repine,
I would not fools should overhear
One sigh that should be wholly *thine*.

3.

If not the goblet pass unquaffed,
It is not drained to banish care,
The cup must hold a deadlier draught,
That brings a Lethe for despair.
And could Oblivion set my soul
From all her troubled visions free,
I'd dash to earth the sweetest bowl
That drowned a single thought of thee.

4.

For wert thou vanished from my mind,
 Where could my vacant bosom turn ?
 And who would then remain behind
 To honour thine abandoned urn ?
 No, no—it is my sorrow's pride
 That last dear duty to fulfil ;
 Though all the world forget beside,
 'Tis meet that I remember still.

5.

For well I know, that such had been
 Thy gentle care for him, who now
 Unmourned shall quit this mortal scene,
 Where none regarded him, but thou :
 And, oh ! I feel in *that* was given
 A blessing never meant for me ;
 Thou wert too like a dream of Heaven,
 For earthly Love to merit thee.

March 14th, 1812.

A VERY MOURNFUL BALLAD

ON THE
SIEGE AND CONQUEST OF ALHAMA. (1)

I.

THE Moorish King rides up and down
Through Granada's Royal town,
From Elvira's gates to those
Of Bivarambla on he goes.

Woe is me, Alhama!

2.

Letters to the monarch tell
How Alhama's city fell;
In the fire the scroll he threw,
And the messenger he slew.

Woe is me, Alhama!

3.

He quits his mule, and mounts his horse,
And through the street directs his course;
Through the street of Zacatin,
To the Alhambra spurring in.

Woe is me, Alhama!

(1) The effect of the original ballad (which existed both in Spanish and Arabic) was such that it was forbidden to be sung by the Moors, on pain of death, within Granada.

4.

When the Alhambra walls he gained,
On the moment he ordained
That the trumpet straight should sound
With the silver clarion round.

Woe is me, Alhama!

5.

And when the hollow drums of war
Beat the loud alarm afar,
That the Moors of town and plain
Might answer to the martial strain,

Woe is me, Alhama!

6.

Then the Moors by this aware
That bloody Mars recalled them there,
One by one, and two by two,
In increasing squadrons flew.

Woe is me, Alhama!

7.

Out then spake an aged Moor
In these words the king before,
" Wherefore call on us, oh King!
" What may mean this gathering? "

Woe is me, Alhama!

8.

" Friends! ye have, alas! to know
" Of a most disastrous blow,
" That the Christians, stern and bold,
" Have obtained Alhama's hold.

Woe is me, Alhama!

9.

Out then spake old Alfaqui,
 With his beard so white to see,
 « Good King! thou art justly served,
 « Good King! this thou hast deserved.
 Woe is me, Alhama!

10.

« By thee were slain, in evil hour,
 « The Abencerrage, Granada's flower;
 « And strangers were received by thee
 « Of Cordova the chivalry.
 Woe is me, Alhama!

11.

« And for this, oh King! is sent
 « On thee a double chastisement,
 « Thee and thine, thy crown and realm
 « One last wreck shall overwhelm.
 Woe is me, Alhama!

12.

« He who holds no laws in awe,
 « He must perish by the law;
 « And Granada must be won,
 « And thyself with her undone. »
 Woe is me, Alhama!

13.

Fire flashed from out the old Moor's eyes,
 The Monarch's wrath began to rise,
 Because he answered, and because
 He spake exceeding well of laws.
 Woe is me, Alhama!

14.

" There is no law to say such things
 " As may disgust the ear of kings : " —
 Thus, snorting with his choler, said
 The Moorish King, and doomed him dead.
 Woe is me, Alhama !

15.

Moor Alfaqui ! Moor Alfaqui !
 Though thy beard so hoary be,
 The King hath sent to have thee seized,
 For Alhama's loss displeased.
 Woe is me, Alhama !

16.

And to fix thy head upon
 High Albambra's loftiest stone ;
 That this for thee should be the law,
 And others tremble when they saw.
 Woe is me, Alhama !

17.

" Cavalier ! and man of worth !
 " Let these words of mine go forth ;
 " Let the Moorish Monarch know,
 " That to him I nothing owe :
 Woe is me, Alhama !

18.

" But on my soul Alhama weighs,
 " And on my inmost spirit preys ;
 " And if the King his land hath lost,
 " Yet others may have lost the most.
 Woe is me, Alhama !

19.

« Sires have lost their children, wives
 « Their lords, and valiant men their lives;
 « One what best his love might claim
 « Hath lost, another wealth, or fame.

Woe is me, Alhama!

20.

« I lost a damsel in that hour,
 « Of all the land the loveliest flower;
 « Doubloons a hundred I would pay,
 « And think her ransom cheap that day.»

Woe is me, Alhama!

21.

And as these things the old Moor said,
 They severed from the trunk his head;
 And to the Alhambra's wall with speed
 'I was carried, as the King decreed.

Woe is me, Alhama!

22.

And men and infants therein weep
 Their loss, so heavy and so deep,
 Granada's ladies, all she rears
 Within her walls, burst into tears.

Woe is me, Alhama!

23.

And from the windows o'er the walls
 The sable web of mourning falls;
 The King weeps as a woman o'er
 His loss, for it is much and sore.

Woe is me, Alhama!

Yes—it shall be,—the magic of that name
 Defies the scythe of ————— of fame;

STANZAS

Written in passing the Ambracian Gulph,
November 14th, 1809.

THROUGH cloudless skies, in silvery sheen,
Full beams the moon on Actium's coast :
And on these waves, for Egypt's Queen,
The ancient world was won and lost.

And now upon the scene I look,
The azure grave of many a Roman ;
Where stern Ambition once forsook
His wavering crown to follow woman.

Florence ! whom I will love as well
As ever yet was said or sung,
(Since Orpheus sang his spouse from hell)
Whilst thou art fair and I am young ;

Sweet Florence ! those were pleasant times,
When worlds were staked for ladies' eyes :
Had bards as many realms as rhymes,
Thy charms might raise new Anthonies,

Though fate forbids such things to be,
Yet, by thine eyes and ringlets curled,
I cannot lose a world for thee,
But would not lose thee for a world.

ADDRESS

Spoken at the opening of DRURY-LANE THEATRE,
Saturday, October 10th, 1812.

IN one dread night our city saw, and sighed,
Bowed to the dust, the Drama's tower of pride ;
In one short hour beheld the blazing fane,
Apollo sink, and Shakspeare cease to reign.

Ye who beheld, (oh ! sight admired and mourned,
Whose radiance mocked the ruin it adorned !)
Through clouds of fire, the massy fragments riven,
Like Israel's pillar, chase the night from heaven ;
Saw the long column of revolving flames
Shake its red shadow o'er the startled Thames,
While thousands, thronged around the burning dome,
Shrank back appalled, and trembled for their home,
As glared the volumed blaze, and ghastly shone
The skies, with lightnings awful as their own,
Till blackening ashes and the lonely wall
Usurped the Muse's realm, and marked her fall ;
Say—shall this new, nor less aspiring pile,
Reared where once rose the mightiest in our isle,
Know the same favour which the former knew,
A shrine for Shakspeare—worthy him and *you* ?

Yes—it shall be—the magic of that name
Defies the scythe of Time, the torch of flame ;

On the same spot still consecrates the scene,
And bids the Drama *be* where she hath *been* :
This fabric's birth attests the potent spell—
Indulge our honest pride, and say, *How well* !

As soars this fane to emulate the last,
Oh ! might we draw our omens from the past,
Some hour propitious to our prayers may boast
Names such as hallow still the dome we lost.
On Drury first your Siddons' thrilling art
O'erwhelmed the gentlest, stormed the sternest heart.
On Drury, Garrick's latest laurels grew ;
Here your last tears retiring Roscius drew,
Sighed his last thanks, and wept his last adieu :
But still for living wit the wreaths may bloom
That only waste their odours o'er the tomb.
Such Drury claimed and claims—nor you refuse
One tribute to revive his slumbering muse ;
With garlands deck your own Menander's head !
Nor hoard your honours idly for the dead !

Dear are the days which made our annals bright,
Ere Garrick fled, or Brinsley ceased to write.
Heirs to their labours, like all high-born heirs,
Vain of *our* ancestry as they of *theirs* ;
While thus Remembrance borrows Banquo's glass
To claim the sceptred shadows as they pass,
And we the mirror hold, where imaged shine
Immortal names, emblazoned on our line,
Pause—ere their feeblers offspring you condemn,
Reflect how hard the task to rival them !

Friends of the stage ! to whom both Players and Plays
Must sue alike for pardon, or for praise,

Whose judging voice and eye alone direct
The boundless power to cherish or reject ;
If e'er frivolity has led to fame,
And made us blush that you forbore to blame ;
If e'er the sinking stage could condescend
To sooth the sickly taste it dare not mend,
All past reproach may present scenes refute,
And censure, wisely loud, be justly mute !
Oh ! since your *fiat* stamps the Drama's laws,
Forbear to mock us with misplaced applause ;
So pride shall doubly nerve the actor's powers,
And reason's voice be echoed back by ours !

This greeting o'er, the ancient rule obeyed,
The Drama's homage by her herald paid,
Receive *our* welcome too, whose every tone
Springs from our hearts, and fain would win your own.
The curtain rises—may our stage unfold
Scenes not unworthy Drury's days of old !
Briton's our judges, Nature for our guide,
Still may *we* please—long, long may *you* preside !

STANZAS

Written after swimming from SESTOS to ABYDOS,
1810.

If, in the month of dark December,
Leander, who was nightly wont
(What maid will not the tale remember?)
To cross thy stream, broad Hellespont!

If, when the wintry tempest roared,
He sped to Hero, nothing loth,
And thus of old thy current poured,
Fair Venus! how I pity both!

For *me*, degenerate modern wretch,
Though in the genial month of May,
My dripping limbs I faintly stretch,
And think I've done a feat to-day.

But since he crossed the rapid tide,
According to the doubtful story,
To woo,—and—Lord knows what beside,
And swam for Love, as I for Glory;

'Twere hard to say who fared the best:
Sad mortals! thus the Gods still plague you!
He lost his labour, I my jest:
For he was drowned, and I've the ague.

TO GENEVRA.

SONNET.

THY cheek is pale with thought, but not from woe ,
And yet so lovely, that if Mirth could flush
Its rose of whiteness with the brightest blush,
My heart would wish away that ruder glow :—
And dazzle not thy deep-blue eyes—but oh !

While gazing on them sterner eyes will gush ,
And into mine my mother's weakness rush,
Soft as the last drops round heaven's airy bow.
For, through thy long dark lashes low depending,
The soul of melancholy Gentleness
Gleams like a seraph from the sky descending,
Above all pain, yet pitying all distress ;
At once such majesty with sweetness blending,
I worship more, but cannot love thee less,

TO THE SAME.

THINE eye blue tenderness, thy long fair hair,
And the wan lustre of thy features—caught
From contemplation—where serenely wrought,
Seems sorrow's softness charmed from its despair—
Have thrown such speaking sadness in thine air,
That—but I know thy blessed bosom fraught
With mines of unalloyed and stainless thought—
I should have deemed thee doomed to earthly care.

With such an aspect, by his colours blent,
 When from his beauty-breathing pencil born,
 (Except that *thou* hast nothing to repent)
 The Magdalen of Guido saw the morn—
 Thy love is lust, thy friendship all a cheat,
 Thy smiles hypocrisy, thy words deceit!
 By nature vile ennobled but by name,
 Each kindred brute might bid thee blush for shame.
 Ye ! who perchance behold this simple urn,
 Pass on—it honours none you wish to mourn :
 To mark a friend's remains these stones arise,
 I never knew but one, and here he lies.

Newstead Abbey. Oct. 30, 1808.

FROM THE PORTUGUESE.

In moments to delight devoted,
 « My life ! » with tend'rest tone, you cry ;
 Dear words ! on which my earth had doted,
 If youth could neither fade nor die.
 To death even hours like these must roll,
 Ah ! then repeat those accents never ;
 Or change « my life ! » into « my soul ! »
 Which, like my love, exists for ever.

TRANSLATION

OF

THE ROMAIC SONG:

« Μωενω μες ἴσ' περίβοι,
« Ω'ραιοῖα ἦ Χανδῇ » etc.

The song from which this is taken is a great favourite with the young girls of Athens of all classes. Their manner of singing it is by verses in rotation, the whole number present joining in the chorus. I have heard it frequently at our « Χόροι, » in the winter of 1810-11. The air is plaintive and pretty.

I.

I ENTER thy garden of roses,
Beloved and fair Haidee,
Each morning where Flora reposes,
For surely I see her in thee.
Oh ! Lovely ! thus low I implore thee,
Receive this fond truth from my tongue,
Which utters its song to adore thee,
Yet trembles for what it has sung ;
As the branch, at the bidding of Nature,
Adds fragrance and fruit to the tree,
Through her eyes, through her every feature
Shines the soul of the young Haidee.

2.

But the loveliest garden grows hateful
When Love has abandoned the bowers ;
Bring me hemlock—since mine is ungrateful,
That herb is more fragrant than flowers.

The poison, when poured from the chalice,
Will deeply embitter the bowl;
But when drunk to escape from thy malice,
The draught shall be sweet to my soul.
Too cruel ! in vain I implore thee
My heart from these horrors to save :
Will nought to my bosom restore thee ?
Then open the gates of the grave.

3.

As the chief who to combat advances
Secure of his conquest before,
Thus thou, with those eyes for thy lances,
Hast pierced through my heart to its core.
Ah ! tell me, my soul ! must I perish
By pangs which a smile would dispel ?
Would the hope, which thou once bad'st me cherish
For torture repay me too well ?
Now sad is the garden of roses,
Beloved, but false Haidee !
There Flora all withered reposes,
And mourns o'er thine absence with me.

SONG.

ATHENS, 1810.

Ζών μου, σάς ἀγαπῶ (1).

1.

MAID of Athens, ere we part,
Give, oh ! give me back my heart !
Or, since that has left my breast,
Keep it now, and take the rest !
Hear my vow before I go,
Ζών μου, σάς ἀγαπῶ.

2.

By those tresses unconfined,
Woody by each Ægean wind ;
By those lids whose jetty fringe
Kiss thy soft cheeks' blooming tinge ;
By those wild eyes like the roe,
Ζών μου, σάς ἀγαπῶ.

(1) *Zoë mou, sas agapo*, or Ζών μου σάς ἀγαπῶ, a Romaic expression of tenderness : if I translate it I shall affront the gentlemen, as it may seem that I supposed they could not ; and if I do not I may affront the ladies. For fear of any misconstruction on the part of the latter I shall do so begging pardon of the learned. It means, « My life, I love you ! » which sounds very prettily in all languages, and is as much in fashion in Greece at this day as, Juvenal tells us, the two first words were amongst the Roman ladies, whose erotic expressions were all Hellenized.

3.

By that lip I long to taste ;
 By that zone-encircled waist ;
 By all the token-flowers (1) that tell
 What words can never speak so well ;
 By Love's alternate joy and woe,
 Ζών μου, σὰς ἀγαπῶ.

4.

Maid of Athens ! I am gone :
 Think of me, sweet ! when alone.—
 Though I fly to Istambol (2),
 Athens holds my heart and soul :
 Can I cease to love thee ? No !
 Ζών μου, σὰς ἀγαπῶ.

(1) In the East (where ladies are not taught to write, lest they should scribble assignations), flowers, cinders, pebbles, etc., convey the sentiments of the parties by that universal deputy of Mercury—an old woman. A cinder says, « I burn for thee ; » a bunch of flowers tied with hair, « Take me and fly ; » but a pebble declares—« what nothing else can. »

(2) Constantinople.

TO MARY.

1.

WELL ! thou art happy, and I feel
That I should thus be happy too ;
For still my heart regards thy weal
Warmly, as it was wont to do.

2.

Thy husband's blest—and 'twill impart
Some pangs to view his happier lot :
But let them pass—Oh ! how my heart
Would hate him, if he loved thee not !

3.

When late I saw thy favourite child,
I thought my jealous heart would break ;
But when th'unconscious infant smiled,
I kissed it, for its mother's sake.

4.

I kissed it, and repressed my sighs
Its father in its face to see ;
But then it had its mother's eyes,
And they were all to love and me.

5.

Mary, adieu ! I must away :
While thou art blest I'll not repine ;
But near thee I can never stay ;
My heart would soon again be thine.

6.

I deemed that time, I deemed that pride
Had quenched at length my boyish flame;
Nor knew, till seated by thy side,
My heart in all, save hope, the same.

7.

Yet was I calm : I knew the time
My breast would thrill before thy look ;
But now to tremble were a crime—
We met, and not a nerve was shook.

8.

I saw thee gaze upon my face,
Yet meet with no confusion there ;
One only feeling could'st thou trace ;
The sullen calmness of despair.

9.

Away ! away ! my early dream
Remembrance never must awake :
Oh ! where is Lethe's fabled stream ?
My foolish heart be still, or break.

EUTHANASIA.

I.

WHEN Time, or soon or late, shall bring
The dreamless sleep that lulls the dead,
Oblivion ! may thy languid wing
Wave gently o'er my dying bed !

2.

No band of friends or heirs be there,
To weep, or wish, the coming blow :
No maiden, with dishevelled hair,
To feel, or feign, decorous woe.

3.

But silent let me sink to Earth,
With no officious mourners near :
I would not mar one hour of mirth,
Nor startle friendship with a fear.

4.

Yet Love, if Love in such an hour
Could nobly check its useless sighs,
Might then exert its latest power
In her who lives and him who dies.

5.

'Twere sweet, my Psyche ! to the last
Thy features still serene to see :
Forgetful of its struggles past,
E'en Pain itself should smile on thee.

6.

But vain the wish—for Beauty still
Will shrink, as shrinks the ebbing breath ;
And woman's tears, produced at will,
Deceive in life, unman in death.

7.

Then lonely be my latest hour,
Without regret, without a groan !
For thousands Death hath ceased to lower,
And pain been transient or unknown.

8.

« Ay, but to die, and go, » alas !
Where all have gone, and all must go !
To be the nothing that I was
Ere born to life and living woe !

9.

Count o'er the joys thine hours have seen,
Count o'er thy days from anguish free,
And know, whatever thou hast been,
'Tis something better not to be.

STANZAS FOR MUSIC.

« O Lachrymarum fons, tenero sacros

« Ducentium ortus ex animo : quater

« Felix ! in imo qui scatentem

« Pectore te , pia Nympha , sensit. »

GRAY'S *Poemata*.

I.

THERE'S not a joy the world can give like that it takes
away,

When the glow of early thought declines in feeling's dull
decay ;

'Tis not on youth's smooth cheek the blush alone which
fades so fast,

But the tender bloom of heart is gone, ere youth itself
be past.

2.

Then the few whose spirits float above the wreck of
happiness,

Are driven o'er the shoals of guilt or ocean of excess :

The magnet of their course is gone, or only points in vain

The shore to which their shiver'd sail shall never stretch
again.

3.

Then the mortal coldness of the soul like death itself
comes down ;

It cannot feel for other's woes, it dare not dream its own ;

That heavy chill has frozen o'er the fountain of our
tears,

And tho' the eye may sparkle still, 'tis where the ice
appears.

4.

Though wit may flash from fluent lips, and mirth distract
the breast,
Through midnight hours that yield no more their former
hope of rest ;
'Tis but as ivy-leaves around the ruin'd turret wreath,
All green and wildly fresh without, but worn and grey
beneath.

5.

Oh could I feel as I have felt,—or be what I have been,
Or weep as I could once have wept, o'er many a vanished
scene !
As springs in deserts found seem sweet, all brackish
though they be,
So midst the wither'd waste of life, those tears would
flow to me.

1815.

ON A NUN⁽¹⁾.

SONNET

Composed in the name of a father whose daughter had recently died shortly after her marriage ; and addressed to the father of her who had lately taken the veil.

OF two fair virgins, modest, though admired,
Heaven made us happy, and now, wretched sires,
Heaven for a nobler doom their worth desires,
And gazing upon *either*, *both* required.
Mine, while the torch of Hymen newly fired,
Becomes extinguished, soon—too soon expires :
But thine within the closing grate retired,
Eternal captive, to her God aspires.
But *thou* at least from out the jealous door,
Which shuts between your never-meeting eyes,
May'st hear her sweet and pious voice once more :
I to the marble, where *my daughter* lies,
Rush,—the swoln flood of bitterness I pour,
And knock, and knock, and knock—but none replies.

(1) Translation from Vittorelli.

ON BEING ASKED

WHAT WAS THE « ORIGIN OF LOVE ? »

THE « Origin of Love ! »—Ah why
That cruel question ask of me,
When thou may'st read in many an eye
He starts to life on seeing thee ?
And should'st thou seek his *end* to know :
My heart forebodes, my fears foresee,
He'll linger long in silent woe ;
But live—until I cease to be.

IMPROMPTU, IN REPLY TO A FRIEND.

WHEN from the heart where Sorrow sits,
Her dusky shadow mounts too high,
And o'er the changing aspect flits,
And clouds the brow, or fills the eye ;
Heed not that gloom, which soon shall sink :
My thoughts their dungeon know too well ;
Back to my breast the wanderers shrink,
And droop within their silent cell.

HEBREW MELODIES.

THE DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB.

I.

THE Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

II.

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

III.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still.

IV.

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride:
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

V.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail;
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

VI.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wall,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

SUN OF THE SLEEPLESS!

SUN of the sleepless ! melancholy star !
Whose tearful beam glows tremulously far,
That show'st the darkness thou can'st not dispel,
How like art thou to joy remembered well !
So gleams the past, the light of other days,
Which shines, but warms not with its powerless rays ;
A night-beam Sorrow watcheth to behold,
Distinct, but distant—clear—but, oh how cold !

SONG OF SAUL

BEFORE HIS LAST BATTLE.

SAUL.

“ **W**ARRIORS and Chiefs! should the shaft or the sword
Pierce me in leading the host of the Lord,
Heed not the corse, though a king's, in your path :
Bury your steel in the bosoms of Gath !

Thou who art bearing my buckler and bow,
Should the soldiers of Saul look away from the foe,
Stretch me that moment in blood at thy feet !
Mine be the doom which they dared not to meet.

Farewell to others, but never we part,
Heir to my royalty, son of my heart !
Bright is the diadem, boundless the sway,
Or kingly the death, which awaits us to-day !

THOU whose spell can raise the dead,
Bid the prophet's form appear.
Samuel, raise thy buried head !
King, behold the phantom seer ! ”

Earth yawned ; he stood the centre of a cloud :
Light changed its hue, retiring from his shroud.
Death stood all glassy in his fixed eye ;
His hand was withered, and his veins were dry ;

His foot, in bony whiteness, glittered there,
 Shrunken and sinewless, and ghastly bare:
 From lips that moved not, and unbreathing frame,
 Like caverned winds, the hollow accents came.
 Saul saw, and fell to earth, as falls the oak,
 At once, and blasted by the thunder-stroke.

SAMUEL.

- « Why is my sleep disquieted ?
 « Who is he that calls the dead ?
 « Is it thou, Oh King ? Behold
 « Bloodless are these limbs, and cold :
 « Such are mine ; and such shall be
 « Thine, to-morrow, when with me :
 « Ere the coming day is done,
 « Such shalt thou be, such thy son.
 « Fare thee well, but for a day ;
 « Then we mix our mouldering clay.
 « Thou, thy race, lie pale and low,
 « Pierced by shafts of many a bow ;
 « And the falchion by thy side
 « To thy heart, thy hand shall guide :
 « Crownless, breathless, headless fall,
 « Son and sire, the house of Saul ! »
-

BY THE RIVERS OF BABYLON

WE SAT DOWN AND WEPT.

I.

WE sate down and wept by the waters
Of Babel, and thought of the day
When our foe, in the hue of his slaughters,
Made Salem's high places his prey ;
And ye, oh her desolate daughters !
Were scattered all weeping away.

II.

While sadly we gazed on the river
Which rolled on in freedom below,
They demanded the song ; but , oh never,
That triumph the stranger shall know !
May this right hand be withered for ever,
Ere it string our high harp for the foe !

III.

On the willow that harp is suspended,
Oh Salem ! its sound should be free ;
And the hour when thy glories were ended
But left me that token of thee ;
And ne'er shall its soft tones be blended
With the voice of the spoiler by me !

THE
WILD GAZELLE.

THE wild Gazelle on Judah's hills
Exulting yet may bound,
And drink from all the living rills
That gush on holy ground ;
Its airy step and glorious eye
May glance in tameless transport by.

A step as fleet, an eye more bright,
Hath Judah witnessed there ;
And o'er her scenes of lost delight
Inhabitants more fair.

The cedars wave on Lebanon,
But Judah's statelier maids are gone !

More blest each palm that shades those plains,
Than Israel's scattered race ;
For, taking root, it there remains
In solitary grace :

It cannot quit its place of birth,
It will not live in other earth.

But we must wander witheringly,
In other lands to die ;
And where our fathers' ashes be,
Our own may never lie :
Our temple hath not left a stone,
And Mockery sits on Salem's throne.

OH! SNATCHED AWAY IN BEAUTY'S BLOOM.

I.

OH! snatched away in beauty's bloom,
On thee shall press no ponderous tomb;
But on thy turf shall roses rear
Their leaves, the earliest of the year;
And the wild cypress wave in tender gloom:

II.

And oft by yon blue gushing stream
Shall Sorrow lean her drooping head,
And feed deep thought with many a dream,
And lingering pause and lightly tread:
Fond wretch! as if her step disturbed the dead!

III.

Away; we know that tears are vain,
That Death nor heeds nor hears distress:
Will this unteach us to complain?
Or make one mourner weep the less?
And thou—who tell'st me to forget,
Thy looks are wan, thine eyes are wet.

FROM JOB.

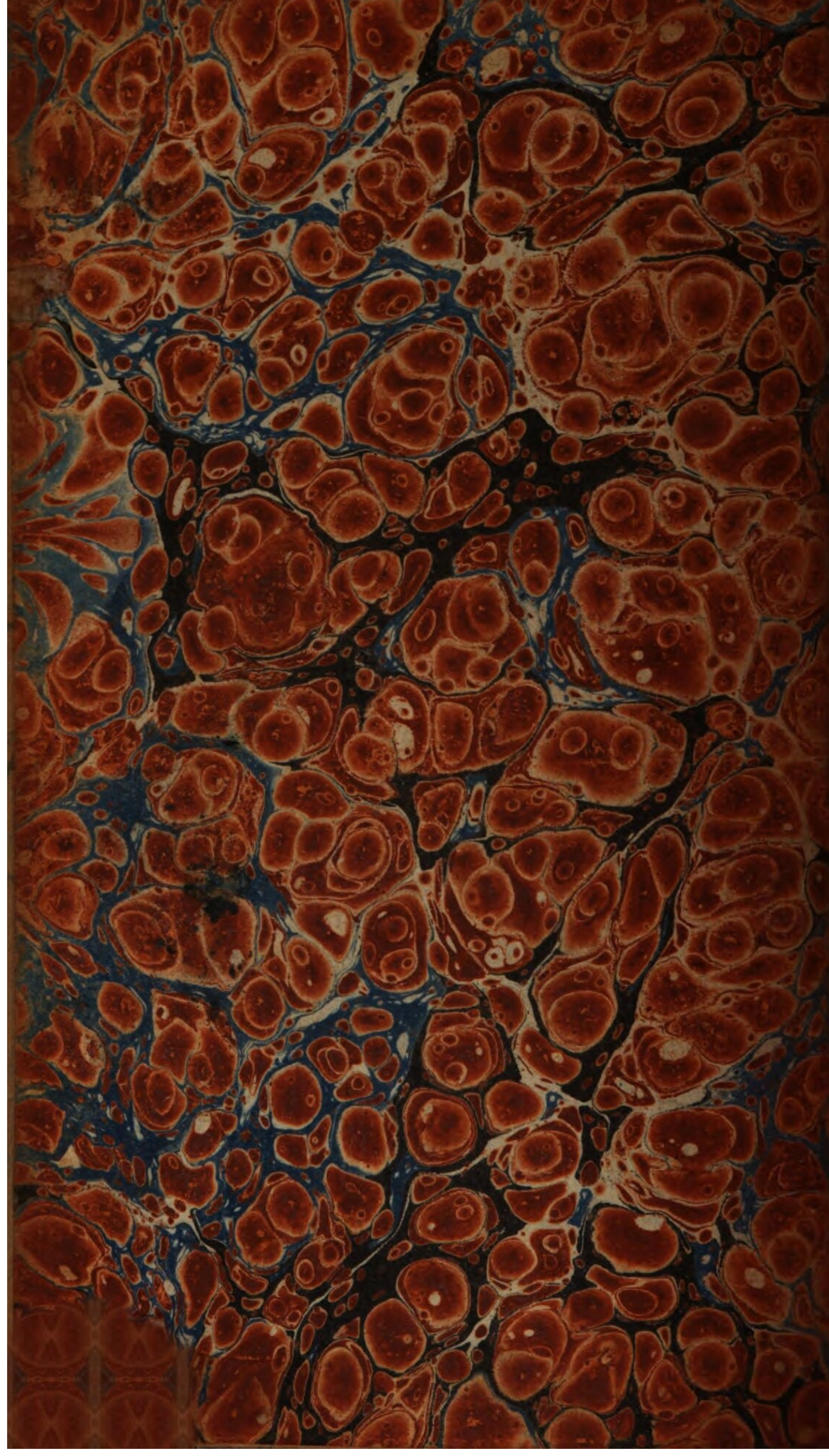
I.

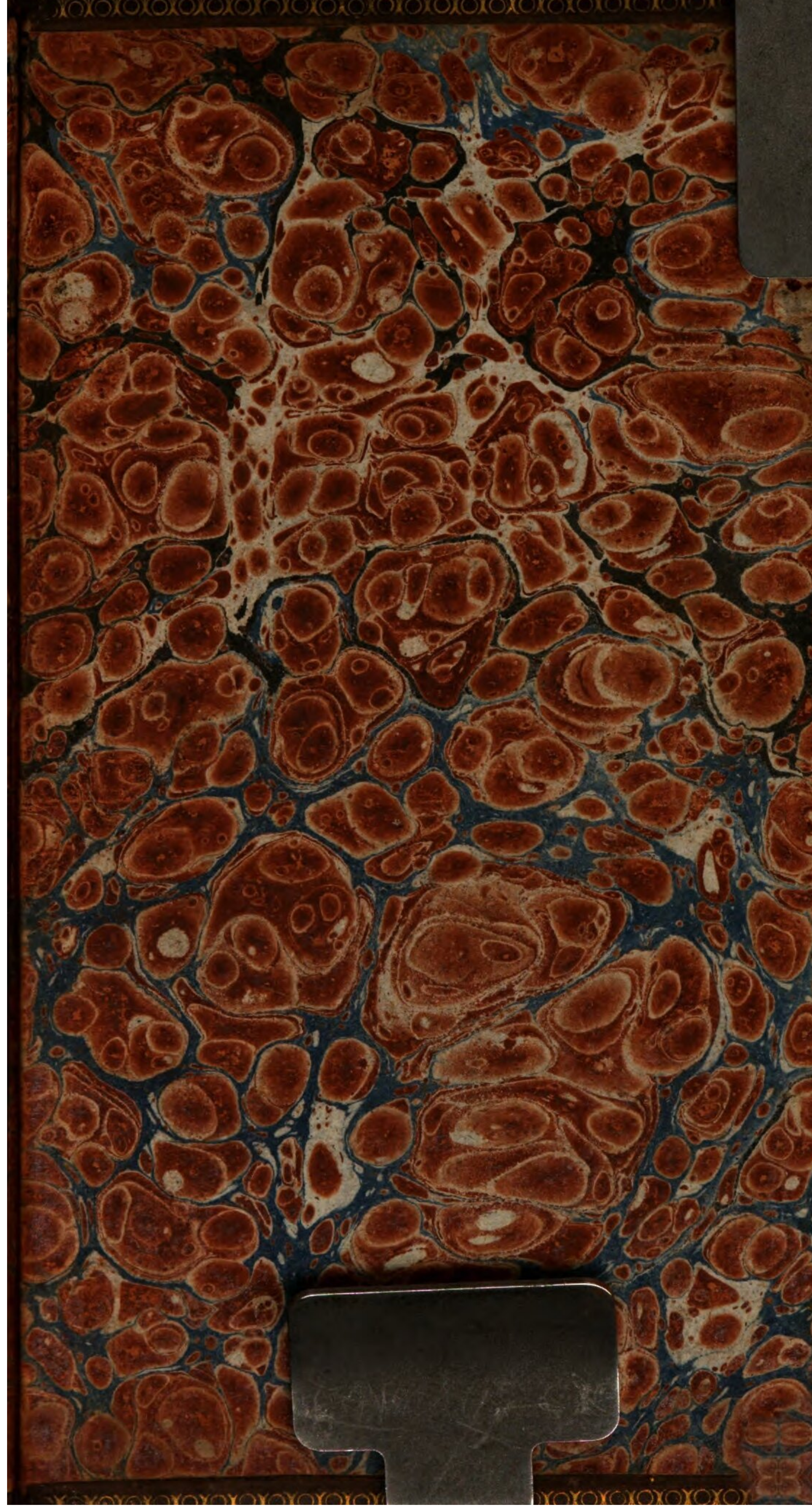
A Spirit passed before me : I beheld
The face of Immortality unveiled—
Deep Sleep came down on ev'ry eye save mine—
And there it stood,—all formless—but divine :
Along my bones the creeping flesh did quake ;
And as my damp hair stiffened, thus it spake :

II.

« Is man more just than God ? Is man more pure
« Than he who deems even seraphs in secure ?
« Creatures of clay—vain dwellers in the dust !
« The most survives you, and are ye more just ?
« Things of a day !—You wither ere the night,
« Heedless and blind to Wisdom's wasted light. »

THE END.





Byron, George Gordon Byron

Lord Byron's works

Bd.: 4

Paris 1821

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